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PART V.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS

OF

ASIATIC TURKEY AND ARABIA.

230

January to March 1912.

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Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Asiatic Turkey and Arabia.

Part V.

[48] No. 1.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1, 1912.)

(No. 954.)

Sir, *Constantinople, December,* 26, 1911.

WITH reference to my dispatch No. 910 of the 11th instant, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from the British acting vice-consul at Bitlis reporting on the lawlessness prevailing in the vilayet, and reviewing the achievements of the Young Turk régime during the last three years.

M. Safrastian is, as you are aware, an Armenian, and his point of view is therefore likely to be somewhat biassed.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Acting Vice-Consul Safrastian to Consul McGregor.

Sir, *Bitlis, December* 3, 1911.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 3rd instant to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, and in continuation of my despatch No. 29 of the 13th ultimo., with respect to the conditions prevailing in this province, I have the honour to report that in the course of the last ten days the state of affairs has been the worst since July, 1908, acts of violence, murders, and brigandage which have just been committed by Kurds in general and the Kurds of Modky especially, and above all the dastardly criminal attitude displayed by the authorities towards such disorders in which the Christians often happen to fall as victims, seem to vie excellently with the state of things under the blackest days of the old régime.

The following summary of crimes resulting altogether in the murder of four Armenians, in the wounding of five, and in the pillaging of some fifteen villages, would be sufficient to give you an idea of the conditions prevailing here in the last ten days:—

One Armenian notable has been killed in Norshen (Sasun) for an agrarian dispute by Papori Guenjo.

Two Armenians, one man and one woman, have been killed in Mitzi (Modky) for having resisted the Kurds when the latter came to levy money, grain and sheep "hafir tax"). Another man wounded.

One Armenian has been killed in Pertag (near Mush). Another man wounded.

Three Armenians of Gendzu (Modky), one being a woman, were dangerously wounded by the men of Haji Reshid Aga four days ago, one of the men bearing not less than sixteen knife wounds.

Kurds carried from the last-named village 700 piastres, thirty sheep, and quantities of grain.

Various numbers of sheep and cattle have been carried by various tribes of Modky from the following villages in the district: Mitzi, Ashpener, Gorvu, Hartkogh, &c.

Gamakh and Djilgan, Armenian poor villages in this neighbourhood, have been robbed of their fifty and twenty-five sheep respectively.

Night attempts by the Kurds of Modky to loot Armenian villages of Papshen, Tcherhor, Bor, &c., in immediate neighbourhood here, have happily been driven back by armed villagers.

The Armenian woman, Peri, of Kharzan, has been abducted by the notorious brigand Nayoe Rasho, her newborn child being left uncared for.

It would take whole pages to mention only the growing cases of burning stacks of hay, brushwood, granaries, &c., belonging to Armenians, and the minor thefts of their goods stolen by their Kurdish neighbours, the news of which are daily pouring in from one end of the vilayet to the other; old grudges cherished by Kurds against their Armenian neighbours are let loose again, and I often hear of late that several Armenian notables in villages hide themselves outside their houses in order to avoid vengeance.

In the face of all these shameful excesses to which this vilayet and Van seem to be the scene, one fact stands out to prove undeniably that the provincial officials are mostly partners to the brigands, and that there can be very little doubt of their complicity in bringing about the present state of affairs.

At the present juncture it might be interesting to remember the gist of my confidential despatch of the 2nd November, 1908, respecting the special administrative order sent to the authorities of Bitlis and Van.

In reviewing the period of the last three and a-half years in a rapid retrospective glance, I humbly venture to bring to your notice the following conclusions, and now I am in possession of ample evidence to base myself upon for stating:—

1. That the Young Turk régime as far as it concerned the protection of the Christian life has proved throughout to be as impotent as the old one was desirous of destroying it. Fully aware of the fact that they could easily prevent most of the murders of Christians by a judicious handling of the criminals, and thus heighten their own prestige and credit, as for instance, by hanging if not the notorious Musa Bey or the like, at least one or two of their followers, the Young Turks have showed a striking lack of moral courage and inability to shake off the Mohamedan mentality of former times.

2. That the honour of the Christian woman throughout this region is as unsafe and as readily at the mercy of the Moslem beast as ever; that the Moslem authorities by their biassed handling of cases of abductions of Christian women by Kurds have more encouraged the Mohamedan lusts towards the latter.

3. That the administration of justice is now as defective as ever, and that wrongly conceived notions of liberty have so much spoilt and demoralised the whole judicial staff that its members are not even ashamed to bargain the amount of bribes to be taken.

4. That the whole administration of the province is turning in such a vicious circle, and almost the whole Goverment staff, from the highest responsible officials downwards, are so incapable and corrupt, that under such circumstances any sensible improvement of conditions can scarcely be hoped for.

The nightmare of a combined Kurdish rising against the Government has been successfully exploited by the constitutional authorities to justify their culpable inactivity in presence of the Kurdish truculence. As I have the honour to maintain for the last two years, I venture again to express the humble opinion that in view of the complete absence of any national idea and cohesion even among the Kurdish leaders, the Government can in no case have the slightest reason to fear a Kurdish serious movement for decades to come, were the ordinary murderers and brigands given to understand that any trouble on their part would be promptly and properly dealt with.

And if you still remember the readiness and enthusiasm with which I have reported in 1909 the slightest attempts made by the Government towards introducing reforms in the administration of this province, and my inclination to minimising even the state of affairs where they looked rather to be ominous, then you will be able to judge the gravity of the situation of which my reports during the last two months bear testimony.

It would appear that a heavy snowfall might only restore order in this vilayet; and it is earnestly to be hoped that during the winter the Cabinet of Said Pasha will decide over the steps to be taken next spring for preventing further developments of a more serious character.

I have, &c.
A. S. SAFRASTIAN.

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[53] No. 2.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1, 1912.)

(No. 959.)

Sir, *Constantinople, December 27, 1911.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Jerusalem relative to movements of Turkish troops in the district of Gaza.

A copy of this despatch has been sent to Cairo by Mr. Satow, who has been instructed to communicate in the future all such information direct to Lord Kitchener by telegraph.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 2.

Consul Satow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 89.)

Sir, *Jerusalem, December 18, 1911.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 88 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to report the following information which I have received from the British consular agent at Gaza as to military movements in that district.

A caravan of, in all, about 150 camels had reached the town escorted by fifty soldiers on mules. These returned to Damascus, whence they had originally come. According to Mr. Knesevich's information this caravan brought rifles, ammunition, tents, and other military stores.

Although it is rumoured that three battalions are expected, up to the present the number of men who have arrived is not sufficient to form one complete battalion. About 300 men have come in in small parties, and are encamped among the sand-dunes between the town and the sea. These men, the majority of whom are said to be corporals, are all mounted on dromedaries. These animals, together with the baggage camels, are with them in camp. Although it is stated that they are intended to patrol the sea-coast as a protection against an Italian raid, it is rumoured that they mean to make their way to Benghazi viâ Ma'an and Egyptian territory. Great secrecy is, however, maintained as to their intentions.

About twenty-five officers reached Gaza on the 9th instant from Damascus, Aleppo, and Beirout. Many of them have brought Bedouin costumes, and have changed their money into English gold, which gives colour to the belief that they intend to try and make their way overland to Tripoli. Others have hired rooms as if intending to make some stay in Gaza, and it may be that they are to impart some military training to the local Bedouins.

On the 13th instant an officer and ten men left for Ma'an.

On the 14th a party of 161 Turkish sailors with sixteen officers and ninety camels reached Gaza from Akaba viâ Egypt.

On the 15th several officers and men, with stores, passed through Gaza on their way to the frontier station at Khan Younis, where it is believed they are to remain.

A certain Shakib Bey Arslan, said to be a cousin of an Ottoman deputy, left Gaza on the 16th instant for Egypt.

It is rumoured in Gaza that the Jaffa Redif battalion is to be sent there.

I have, &c.
H. E. SATOW.

P.S. *December* 19.—The acting vice-consul at Jaffa reports that about 500 recruits have been sent to Haiffa by land during the last ten days.

H. E. S.

[51088] No. 3.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Foreign Office, January 2, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th ultimo regarding the dredging of the Shat-el-Arab.

I am to inform you, in reply, that Mr. Greenway, the representative of the firm who are concerned, called at this Office on the 29th ultimo, and intimated that the proposal would only be acceptable if an Anglo-Turkish commission were entrusted with the management and levying of tolls.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[49832/11] No. 4.

Foreign Office to Western Assurance Company.

Foreign Office, January 2, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th ultimo relative to the cases arising out of the riots at Adana, in which your company are interested, and to suggest that you should forward to this Office, for his consideration, the statement of the claim which they propose to bring against the Turkish Government to recover the sum paid, in accordance with the compromise arrived at, to their insured under the policies which were the subject of the action.

I am to state that till Sir E. Grey has had an opportunity of examining this claim he will not be in a position to state whether he can furnish His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople with instructions to support it.

I am to add that the other questions raised in your letter will be dealt with in the communication which will apprise you of the decision arrived at on the above point.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

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[555] No. 5.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 4, 1912.)

(No. 963.)

Constantinople, December 30, 1911.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Erzeroum, transmiting a memorandum from His Majesty's vice-consul at Bitlis, giving an account of his journey from Bitlis to Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 5.

Consul McGregor to Sir G Lowther.

(No. 100.)

Erzeroum, December 20, 1911.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a memorandum drawn up, at my request, by Mr. Safrastian, and giving an interesting account of facts observed by him during the recent journey from Bitlis to Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
P. J. C. McGREGOR.

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[787] No. 5.*

The Marquess Imperiali to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 5.)

(Translation.)

THE Italian Ambassador presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to request that he will be so good as to inform him what is the frontier line between the British and Ottoman territories to the west of Aden and to the east of Cape Varner.

London, January 4, 1912.

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[787] No. 6*.

Sir Edward Grey to the Marquis Imperiali.

HIS Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Italian Ambassador, and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of his Excellency's communication of the 4th instant, asking for information as to the frontier between British and Ottoman territory to the west of Aden and to the east of Cape Varner.

As regards the former point, Sir E. Grey has the honour to transmit herewith a map showing the boundary in question, which he would beg the Marquis Imperiali to be good enough to return to him in due course.

As regards the latter point, no cape of the name given can be found in any map in the possession of the Foreign Office, and Sir E. Grey would be glad if the Ambassador would kindly indicate approximately the latitude and longitude of the spot to facilitate a further search.

He has at the same time the honour to inform his Excellency that His Majesty's Government recognise no claim of Turkey to territorial jurisdiction on any part of the coast of Arabia east of Aden (where the cape in question is presumably situated) as far as Ujais in the district of El-Katif in the Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf.

Foreign Office, January 5, 1912.

Enclosure 2 in No. 5.

Acting Vice-Consul Safrastian to Consul McGregor.

Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 18, 1911.

I HAVE the honour to state that on my way from Bitlis to Erzeroum I have passed through the eastern part of the plain of Mush, Akhlat, Bulanik, and Khinis. In all the above-mentioned districts but the last, the state of things was so hopelessly bad that all peaceful population, both Christian and Moslem, were in a state of constant terror.

At Gol-Bashi, a Kurdish village in Mush, the brigands of the notorious Musa Bey had killed two defenceless kurds and had robbed most of the village. At Mezk, an Armenian village at Akhlat, where I stayed on the 12th instant, some mounted kurds approached the village at midnight by firing. I encouraged the gendarme who escorted me to reply to them, and after some exchange of shots the kurds disappeared. The villagers, however, continued to remain in a frightened condition, and were almost sure that the attack would be repeated.

At Malakend, a mixed village at Bulanik, one Armenian shopkeeper, Harout, had been killed some days ago, and all his shop plundered. The villagers assured me that they recognised Ného Bey, the youngest brother of Musa Bey, who led the band. The Armenian fought alone for four hours, and was overcome when he ran short of cartridges.

At Liz, a large Armenian village in Bulanik, which is the centre of a nahié, the old and useless Mudir had ordered the villagers not to disturb him if the village was attacked, &c.

I still could mention several such proofs of the prevailing unrest and anarchy. Among all these two facts stand out quite obviously to show that the authority of the Government is daily becoming more and more a mere shadow, and that those districts are greatly disturbed where the inhuman devil, Musa Bey, can stretch his hand.

There is little doubt that the upper Bulanik is much more quieter than the lower one, as Musa Bey cannot make his influence felt in the former part.

In the Caza of Khinis and other districts of Erzeroum, from which I passed, I noticed that a fair measure of tranquillity and security is prevailing.

It is to be expected that the somewhat alarming and exaggerated news of the conditions as described by one section of the Armenian authorities and press as prevailing at Bitlis would not be realised in the end.

I have, &c.
A. S. SAFRASTIAN.

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[739] No. 6.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 5.)

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) R. *Pera, January* 4, 1912.

YOUR telegram No. 472 of 29th December and Cairo telegram No. 70 of 29th December. War: Gun-running.

In reply to representations, the Turkish Government declare that Minister of War has disclaimed any intention of attempting the impossible task of running across Syrian and Egyptian frontier, and denied that any steps had been taken with this object.

I pointed out that smuggling through other parts of Egypt had already occurred, and that the object of my communication was to prevent the possibility of disagreeable incidents.

(Sent to Cairo.)

[1132] No. 7.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 4.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 3, 1912.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 353 of the 15th December last, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's vice-consul at Hodeidah, reporting the bombardment by Italian ships of ports in Yemen waters.

I would call your attention to the last paragraph of Mr. Richardson's despatch.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 7.

Vice-Consul Richardson to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 48 E.)
Sir, *Hodeidah, December 5, 1911.*

I HAVE the honour to confirm my cablegram of the 3rd instant, reporting the activity of Italian ships of war in the southern part of the Red Sea.

On the 30th ultimo, the old third-class cruiser "Dogali" bombarded the Turkish fortified position at Sheikh Said for a few hours, and then sailed in the direction of Perim.

The local authorities state that the forts at Sheikh Said returned the fire of the Italians, and believe that the cruiser was hit and disabled.

Reuter's telegrams from Perim, however, do not confirm the fact of the "Dogali" being damaged or disabled. Two Turkish soldiers were slightly wounded in the fort by accident. There were no other casualties.

On the same day, the gun-boat "Aretusa" appeared off Mokha, and sent a steam launch in to capture two dhows that were lying close to the shore. The launch was fired on and compelled to return to the ship. The "Aretusa" thereupon opened fire and sank the dhows, and also shelled the town for several hours.

One Turkish soldier was killed and four Arabs wounded on shore, and about half-a-dozen huts burnt.

On the 1st instant the "Aretusa" proceeded further north, and throughout that day bombarded the port of Khoka, that lies midway between Mokha and Hodeidah.

The whole village was destroyed and ten or twelve sambooks sunk.

According to the authorities, the casualties on shore at Khoka were twenty Arabs killed and many more wounded.

Besides containing a fishing village, Khoka is one of the principal ports in the Yemen littoral for the illicit importation of arms into this country, and also for the landing in contraband of other articles of commerce.

The cruiser "Dogali" visited Mokha and the neighbouring villages of Yuktul and Dabab on the 3rd, and threw a number of shells into these places.

The third-class cruiser "Volturno" has been actively patrolling the coast between Midi and Camaran during the past three weeks, evidently in search of the Turkish gun-boat squadron that is lying concealed in one of the many reef-protected anchorages in the Farsan group of islands.

The above-mentioned cruiser has appeared off Camaran three or four times lately, and on one occasion during my stay at that place anchored in the bay for a whole night.

The activity of the Italians in these waters has naturally caused quite a scare amongst the Yemen authorities.

It need hardly be mentioned that the reports cabled by Reuter of the concentration of Turkish and Arab forces along the Yemen coast, and of the organisation of raids on the Eritrean coast, and which the Italian Government assign as their reasons for the bombardment of Mokha and other places, are absolutely devoid of foundation.

I have, &c.
G. A. RICHARDSON.

[1137] No. 8.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 9.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 3, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a quarterly report on the affairs of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey for the quarter ended the 31st December, 1911.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 8.

Quarterly Report on the Affairs of Syria.

Turco-Italian War.

IN spite of inflammatory anti-Italian and sometimes anti-Christian articles in the local newspapers, the news of the declaration of war was on the whole received with comparative calm in Syria. In the early part of November, however, the exaggerated reports in the press of Turkish victories caused a general feeling of uneasiness among the Christian population, who feared that, in consequence of these reports, the Moslems might be encouraged to rise against them. At Beirout there was a panic among the Christians, many of whom left the town and fled inland. At Haifa the situation was serious enough, in the opinion of His Majesty's consul at Jerusalem, to warrant the dispatch of a British war-ship. Such a step, however, proved unnecessary, as the local authorities in all parts of Syria did everything in their power to allay the apprehensions of the Christian population and generally to maintain order.

During the latter part of November reports were received of a concentration at Gaza of Turkish troops, whose object was presumably to attempt to cross through Egypt into Tripoli.

Beirout Vilayet.

At the end of September Noureddin Bey resigned the post of Vali of Beirout on the grounds of ill-health. His place was temporarily filled by General Hashim Pasha pending the arrival from the Hedjaz of the new vali, Hazim Bey.

Damascus Vilayet: Hauran.

The Bedouins have in general been less turbulent, though excitement was raised among the Ruwela (a very important tribe of Aneyza Bedouins) by the arrest of Sheikh Nouri Shaalan. The latter came to Damascus presumably to continue discussions with Sami Pasha, and was promptly arrested.

Engineers have been sent from Constantinople to survey a small branch of the Hedjaz Railway to join Busr-Eski-Sham to Derna, as desired by Sami Pasha.

Jerusalem Sanjak.

A quarrel has broken out between the Governor of Jerusalem, Djevdet Bey (see last quarterly report), and the military commandant. His Majesty's consul reports that, whereas the latter is popularly supposed to be far from incorruptible, the former is honest and straightforward and fair towards foreigners. This latter quality, indeed, forms one of the charges brought against him by his enemies.

Enclosure 2 in No. 8.

Quarterly Report on Affairs of Anatolia, ended December 31, 1911.

Smyrna.

THE news of the declaration of war was received with the utmost tranquillity, in spite of one or two fanatical attempts to stir up ill-feeling against the Christians.

The colony of Cretan Moslems at Smyrna, numbering about 10,000, presented the only real cause for alarm. They have been a constant source of trouble, especially since the constitution, and have always been concerned in all acts of violence connected with the Greek boycott.

Messrs. Whittal and Co., a British shipping firm, recently suffered at the hands of these men, who kidnapped one of the firm's employés, an Italian. The culprits were afterwards caught and imprisoned.

Prize Court.—A prize court was instituted at Smyrna shortly after the commencement of the war.

Recrudescence of Brigandage.—On the 11th October a well-known fig merchant named Christides, in the employ of Messrs. Ballantyne, McNair, and Clifford, was carried off at Demirdjih on the Aidin Railway by the notorious Tchakirdjali's band, but was released within three weeks on payment of the sum of 1,400 Turkish liras. Shortly after the release of Christides, a rich Turk, Osman Agha, was carried off. Soldiers and gendarmes were sent in pursuit, and, after a skirmish lasting twelve hours, a body, purporting to be that of the famous brigand, was discovered without head or arms. It was identified by the brigand's wife, but, though the authorities appear to be satisfied with the identity of the corpse, doubt certainly still exists as to whether he is really dead or not.

On the 15th September news was received of the murder of the ex-Bishop of Anneo's sister and her son at their house near Sokia. All the furniture and goods in the house were destroyed. The murders are believed to be the work of some Circassians.

"*Fraudulent Shippers.*"—As the result of the shipment by the "Black Band," a firm of fraudulent shippers, of forty-one bales of worthless merchandise to Liverpool, which was consequently returned to Smyrna, a protest was lodged by the board of directors of the Smyrna Chamber of Commerce against the manifestly unjust demand for 3,000 piastres gold, put forward by the Customs authorities as demurrage. Proceedings were taken against the band, all the members of which were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

Anti-Greek Boycott.—During the month of November the anti-Greek boycott came definitely to an end.

Shipping had suffered most, whilst Greek merchants had been but little affected. Though the boycott undoubtedly fell very severely on certain individuals, it seems fairly evident that Turkish rather than Greek commerce suffered on the whole.

Adana.

After the departure of Djemal Bey, late Vali of Adana, much persistent talk arose both in Christian and Moslem circles about his alleged malpractices during his tenure of office.

The matters which formed the subject of allegations were:—

1. The distribution of the amounts sent from Constantinople for rebuilding after the massacre of 1909.
2. Two building contracts.
3. The sale of Government lands in the mutessarillik of Hamidieh.

In these affairs imputations of dishonesty were alleged; and though there are no grounds for believing that Djemal Bey took any part in them, the widespread and persistent feeling that his governorship was not above suspicion, necessitate that the charges should be investigated.

Panic at Adana.—Towards the end of November last, such a profound feeling of anxiety manifested itself amongst the Armenians, who feared an attack from the Moslem population, as to induce the acting British vice-consul to apply for the protection of a British ship. Upon enquiry here, however, and as no reliable facts could be produced, it was not considered necessary that such a step should be taken.

In consequence, however, of constant warnings given by Moslems to their Christian friends, to leave Adana "before January," the feeling of unrest became undoubtedly well defined and widespread.

Aleppo.

The general state of the city and district calls for no special remark. Apart from one serious brawl in the prison beneath the Serai on the 18th August, in which one man was killed and seven badly wounded, there have been no incidents.

On the 21st September Mezha Bey, the new vali, succeeded Hussein Kiazim Bey; he has so far shown himself business-like and friendly.

The news of the outbreak of the war excited a lively interest for about ten days amongst Turkish officials, but the futility of the struggle from the Turkish point of view has left the population cold and resigned.

Erzeroum District.

Towards the end of the last quarter a great deal of ill-feeling and discord was caused in Moslem circles in Erzeroum by the publication, in an Armenian newspaper, of an article strongly criticising the present régime, and demanding in scarcely veiled terms an Armenian autonomy.

As a result of this imprudent step, meetings of the supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress were held, at which the expediency of "giving the Armenians another lesson" was discussed. Thanks, however, to the conciliatory attitude of the vali, moderate councils prevailed.

The announcement of the Turco-Italian war at first caused a certain amount of excitement, which developed into a general feeling of depression at the prospect of the loss of Tripoli, which is regarded as certain.

Unconfirmed rumours to the effect that Russia was massing large numbers of troops on the frontier led to the belief that an occupation of the province was contemplated; this prospect, however, was received by the populace with no feeling of aversion or disgust, the official classes, on the contrary were greatly agitated, and declared that the only hope for Turkey lay in a quarrel amongst the European Powers.

Opening of New Police School.—On the 27th November a new police school was opened at Erzeroum, based on the same lines as the system established some time ago at Constantinople. The actual number of pupils enrolled so far was thirty. The new school is intended to supply the wants of the vilayets of Erzeroum, Diarbekir, Van, Bitlis, Sivas, and Marmuret-ul-Aziz.

Bitlis.

Unparalleled disorder and anarchy are reported in the vilayet of Bitlis, arising out of the incompetence of the authorities and the lawlessness of the Kurdish chiefs, notably Mussa Bey and the Sheikh of Khirzan.

Effect of Turko-Italian War.—The Turco-Italian war seemed to have had a rather quieting effect upon the Kurds, though the feeling of general insecurity prevailed as before, and the authority of the Government remained as weak as ever.

Russian Propagandist Campaign.—It appears that Russian progagandists have lately been making great headway among numbers of discontented Hamidieh officers at Melazgerd and Bulanik in the direction of paving the way for a "Russian occupation" of the territory.

The appointment of another Russian consular officer at Bitlis caused great anxiety amongst Moslems, who see in this a striking proof of Russia's serious intentions.

Van.

Agrarian Question.—In all districts where Armenians were to be found the unsettled land question still remains the source of much complaint and bad relations between Armenians and Kurds. The question is now more acute than last year, and the Armenians have been steadily acquiring arms and ammunition.

The population as a whole remains unmoved by the war, whilst the Armenian section rejoice openly at Turkey's misfortunes.

Change of Valis.—Ismail Hakki Bey has replaced Nazim Bey as Vali of Van; this change has been brought about largely by the complaints of the Tashnak section of the population.

Enclosure 3 in No. 8.

Quarterly Report on Affairs of the Yemen, ended December 31, 1911.

IMMEDIATELY after the declaration of war and the appearance in the Red Sea of Italian ships a holy war was proclaimed by the Imam Yahya and other notables.

Great excitement prevailed amongst the tribes of the interior, which mustered in

preparation for a descent on the coast. The services of 100,000 Arabs were offered by the Imam Yahya for the war.

In consequence of the unfriendly relations between Bin Saoud and the Grand Shereef of Mecca all communications between Najd and Mecca were stopped.

Bin Saoud has been levying taxes on the Oteiba tribe, the backbone of the Grand Shereef's authority in the country, hence the order for the looting of all goods bound for Najd or sent thence to Mecca. It has been rumoured that the Grand Shereef contemplated another expedition against Bin Saoud, the success of his former expedition in 1910 being considered very doubtful.

Enclosure 4 in No. 8.

Report on the Affairs of Mesopotamia for the quarter ended December 31, 1911.

Muntafik Arabs.

THE commission of enquiry sent to the Muntafik country (see last quarterly report) completed its report in October. The commissioners seem to have arrived at the conclusion that the root of the trouble lies in the fact that the arable land on the lower Euphrates is in the hands of a few powerful chiefs and sheikhs, who oppress the Arabs and instigate tribal disturbances for their own ends, and that the Muntafik question is thus merely a land question, which might be solved by "expropriating" the present owners and dividing the land in small parcels among the minor sheikhs. It is doubtful, however, whether such a question could be solved in so simple a manner.

Bagdad Railway.

Four engineers and a doctor arrived in Mosul to complete the survey for the line between Nisibin and Mosul. The work was finished by the end of October. Four other parties of engineers were then at work on the survey of the line between Mosul and Bagdad, 350 kilom. of which remain to be completed.

No land has been purchased as yet, openly at all events, for the railway company in Mosul, and no buildings have been begun.

Messrs. Wönckhaus and Co. are reported to be in negotiation for the purchase, on behalf of the railway company, of a plot of land on the river bank at Bussorah, where a depôt can be established for storing material on its way to Bagdad.

The Moderate Liberal Club in Bussorah.

The club, the formation of which by Seyyid Talib, deputy for Bussorah, was alluded to in the last quarterly report, was formally opened on the 7th September. The local Union and Progress Club had practically ceased to exist. The published programme of the new club differs but slightly from that of the Union and Progress, the main difference being that while the latter was organised and controlled by Turkish officials, the former is organised chiefly by local Arab landowners and notables. The Moderate Liberals have also abandoned the policy of Turkification in favour of that of equal treatment for all nationalities.

Seyyid Talib, who professes to the Anglophile, has not a good past record, and owes his influence mainly to the position and wealth of his family.

In Mosul an attempt was also made to form a branch of the "Moderate Liberal Club," the chief movers in this enterprise being Daoud Youssefhané, the Roman Catholic Chaldean deputy for Mosul, Reshid Effendi Omarizadé and Asuf Effendi, acting kaïmakam of Akra and editor of the reactionary "Nijah" newspaper. The attempt failed, owing to the apparently unanimous opposition of the army and the influence tactfully exerted against it by the vali.

Tiari Expedition.

The Jelki tribe of Kurds having attacked some Christian shepherds who were being escorted by zaptiehs, and having killed seven Christians, wounded two of the escort, and carried off the sheep, a small expeditionary force, consisting of the

2nd battalion of the 105th Regiment, was dispatched from Mosul to the region of Tiari to punish the offenders.

The expedition returned to Mosul at the beginning of October, having done little more than demonstrate the impotence of the authorities, only a very small number of the sheep having been recovered and the murderers left unpunished.

The Shammar Arabs.

The Shammar tribe continued to give trouble, and several cases of plundering were reported against them. There is a growing feeling that this tribe, commanding as it does all the roads west of the Tigris, is likely to become more and more turbulent until some step is taken by the authorities to dissipate the impression of weakness conveyed by the fruitless expedition against it undertaken by Nazim Pasha's orders early in the present year. No signs, however, of any activity on the part of the local authorities were to be observed.

Though most of the outrages committed are generally attributed to the Shammars, it is likely that the real authors are in many instances gangs of Turkomans in league with certain notables of Mosul.

New Vali of Bussorah.

Hassan Riza Bey, the new vali, arrived in Bussorah on the 20th September. His Majesty's consul reports that he gives the impression of being a reasonable and enlightened man

Disturbances on the Lower Euphrates and Tigris.

His Majesty's consul at Bussorah reported in September that a feeling of insecurity and restlessness prevailed in Bussorah owing to the disturbed state of the rivers. In view of this state of affairs, His Majesty's consul suggested that a British gun-boat should be sent to patrol the Shat-el-Arab. His Majesty's ship "Odin" was dispatched, and arrived at Mohammerah about the 20th September to patrol the river between that place and Fao. Thanks to this precaution, no cases of piracy have occurred.

Anti-Italian Demonstration at Bussorah.

A public meeting was convened for the 27th October to protest against Italian action in Tripoli. The meeting was held outside the town, but was sparsely attended, those present being unarmed. Speeches were made, but aroused no great enthusiasm, and the collection only resulted in the subscription of £ T. 15.

Proclamation by Mujtched of Nejef of Holy War against Russia, England, and Italy.

Seyyid Mahomet Kazim Yezdi, Mujtched of Nejef, issued a "fetva" at the beginning of December proclaiming a holy war against Russia, England, and Italy. This "fetva," which was said to have been forcibly extorted from the mujtched by the Kaïmakam of Nejef, was exhibited at the shrines of Nejef and Kerbela, and copies of it were sent into Persia. The mujtched had hitherto refrained from meddling with politics, and consequently this "fetva" produced all the greater impression. The kaïmakam, who is a prominent member of the Committee of Union and Progress, and was reputed to be of more authority than the Vali of Bagdad, was summoned to Bagdad and charged with obtaining the "fetva" by force. It seems clear that he was guilty. A violent anti-foreign—and especially anti-English and anti-Russian—newspaper campaign was begun at Bagdad. The vali promised to do what he could, unofficially, to check it. The sudden death, a few days after the issue of the "fetva," of Seyyid Mahomet Kazim was expected to calm the excitement at Nejef.

In answer to representations made at the Sublime Porte, the Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that the "fetva" had been issued on the mujtched's own authority, their religious position being far too great to admit of the interference of a kaïmakam.

A later report from Bagdad states that the kaïmakam has returned to Nejef, where in his absence Seyyid Yezdi issued a second "fetva" more moderate in tone, in which no reference is made to Great Britain. The issue of this "fetva" was due

apparently to a desire to prove that the first was not issued under pressure from the kaimakam.

The religious movement appears to have failed for the present, and the vali is said to have addressed warnings to the mujteheds.

Trade Routes from Bagdad into Persia.

The trade routes from Bagdad into Persia have been practically closed for the last two months. This state of affairs has caused considerable loss to British merchants, British goods to the value of 250,000*l.* being accumulated at Bagdad.

Bagdad Demolitions.

A cheque for £T. 5,400 was received on the 30th November from the Sublime Porte in payment of claims of certain British subjects at Bagdad, Kadhimain, and Kerbela for compensation for losses suffered by them through the demolition or expropriation of their properties in those towns (see preceding quarterly reports).

The Sublime Porte stated that the case of the claim for compensation by the brothers Abdul Ali, ice manufacturers, on account of the enforced lowering of their prices, was still forming a subject of correspondence with the local authorities.

[1138] No. 9.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Pera, January 3, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I learn from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah that very cordial telegrams have been exchanged between the Sublime Porte and the Sheikh of Koweit as the result of the latter's subscription of £T. 3,000 to the Turkish War Fund, his Highness emphasising his devotion to the Empire.

I have also heard from the same source that there is some idea of making the sheikh a mutessarif.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[1235] No. 10.

Tewfik Pasha to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 9.)

TEVFIK PACHA présente ses compliments à Sir Edward Grey, et pour faire suite aux précédentes communications qu'il a eu l'honneur d'adresser à son Excellence au sujet de la non-observation par les navires de guerre italiens des principes du droit de la guerre, qui interdisent le bombardement des ports non fortifiés, s'empresse de l'informer, suivant des nouvelles officielles parvenues au Gouvernement Impérial de la préfecture du port de Hodeïdah, que des vaisseaux de guerre italiens ont bombardé, le 1er courant, le petit port de Djébané, qui est dénué de toute fortification ou garnison militaire.

En signalant ces infractions à l'attention du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique, Tevfik Pacha prie son Excellence Sir Edward Grey de bien vouloir protester auprès du Cabinet de Rome contre ces violations répétées des lois de la guerre.

Ambassade Impériale ottomane, Londres,
le 8 janvier, 1912.

[1297] No. 11.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 6, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have this morning received a telegram from His Majesty's vice-consul at Hodeidah stating that the Italian ships "Puglia" and "Piemonte" shelled the military camp at Jabanah for an hour on the 1st instant, without however causing any casualties.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[1717] No. 12.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 12.)

(No. 2. Commercial.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Pera, January 12, 1912.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 286 of 24th October, on my representations regarding the silting up of the Khendek Creek, the outlet for grain at Bussorah, instructions were sent to the local authorities at Bussorah to have creek dredged.

Vali now states that he hopes to get dredger from India, and refers to the question of dredging the bar and his application to British firm as reported in telegram from acting consul, 23rd October last year. The same secured the contract for the custom-house roof, and work is now proceeding satisfactorily.

Vali asked consul to get Messrs. Priestman, of Hull, who have forwarded catalogue, to send expert to study the question.

It would be most desirable that dredging contract should be secured by British firm, but operations at the bar, which vali wishes to link up with the clearing of the creek, may possibly be of interest to Indian Government, and in that case, if they wish to participate, it cannot perhaps be left to be dealt with entirely by local authorities.

Information about Priestman, of Hull, would be useful.

[1919] No. 13.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 15.)

(No. 18.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 7, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Erzeroum respecting the political situation of that province.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 13.

Consul McGregor to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 101.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, December 27, 1911.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that, whereas the general political situation in this province has hitherto compared favourably with that in the neighbouring vilayets of Bitlis, Van, and Diarbekir, it is at present characterised by a certain uneasiness which is probably a reflex of the confusion prevailing at the capital and has not failed to make itself evident in local affairs.

The influence of the Committee of Union and Progress, which, although at no time based on popular assent, had received an apparent stimulus from Javid Bey's visitation in the autumn, has not withstood the strain of recent events so well as was predicted, and dissension is now rife among the rank and file of its adherents, while both foreign travellers and "the man in the street" do not scruple to declare that not only has the

new régime done nothing to improve the lot of the population, but that corruption and incapacity are even more conspicuous than in the days of Abdul Hamid.

Two committee clubs at least—those at Narman and Hassan Kala—have ceased to exist, and schism has now appeared in the club at Erzeroum, as the departure of its most active members, Nazim Bey, Galib Bey (director of the post-office), and Captain Avin Bey (Kaïmakam of Solduz), has been followed by a series of squabbles among the local members, some of whom are said to meditate joining the new "Liberal *entente*."

I incline to believe that the vali is attempting to save the situation by a bid for increased Armenian support, but in this he is unlikely to succeed, as the mass of the Armenians, although it is a fact that they have increased in prosperity since the re-establishment of the constitution and enjoy much more personal liberty than in former time, abhor the committee, and the recent proceedings of the Tashnakists have not been such as to facilitate a closer understanding. Their chief offences have been committed by their newspaper, the "Harach," which, after publishing several political articles of amazing tactlessness, has within the last few days surpassed itself by reporting that a general massacre of Christians had taken place at Salonica in consequence of the blowing-up of the Ottoman Bank. This piece of news caused most intelligible alarm among all classes at Erzeroum, and although the vali, who had applied to Constantinople for information, has been instructed to issue a *démenti* and institute proceedings against the paper, the deplorable effect will remain.

Placards denouncing the committee and the constitution have lately been posted up in this town, and it is said that nocturnal meetings of mollahs and other reactionaries are being held; while both Armenians and Moslems are credibly reported as adding to their stores of fire-arms. No disorders have, however, taken place, and the only visible precautionary measure taken consists in nightly patrols of mixed pickets of police and gendarmes, which the vali declares have been ordered in consequence of a recent case of burglary.

I understand, however, that the situation in the Kurdish vilayets generally has at last roused misgivings among the higher military authorities, whose culpable complaisance towards the Kurdish boys is so largely responsible therefor, and it is stated on good authority that a stringent order has been issued by the Minister of War to the military authorities throughout Kurdistan enjoining loyal co-operation with the civil authorities in all measures devised for the maintenance of order.

It is generally maintained, and with this view I am disposed to concur, that the quelling of Kurdish lawlessness would be a task quite within the resources of the Government were it undertaken in a spirit of serious resolve, but given the past record of the military authorities and the worthlessness of their present civilian colleagues in the vilayets of Bitlis, Van, and Diarbekir, it would be hazardous to count on any such effort being made.

I have, &c.
P. J. C. McGREGOR.

[1749] No. 14.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 7, 1912.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 16 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report that I have to-day received a telegram from His Majesty's vice-consul at Hodeidah, informing me that Loheia was bombarded by an Italian vessel on the 4th and 5th instant.

No casualties are reported. A shell struck the house of a British subject, but no damage was done to the town.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[1747] No. 15.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 3. Confidential.)
Sir, *Rome, January 9, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I learn that the King of Italy in conversation a few days ago stated that it had come to the knowledge of the Italian Government that the situation in the Yêmen was once more likely to become critical. The Turkish troops had all been concentrated at four points on the coast, where they were practically immobilised, and since some of these points had been blockaded and even attacked by Italian cruisers, the Arabs had been encouraged to resume a menacing attitude. The sum of 30,000*l.* recently sequestrated in the Red Sea by Italian war-ships consisted of some 20,000*l.* in English gold, while the remaining 10,000*l.* was made up of all sorts of non-descript coinages. It was presumed that this sum, evidently collected with difficulty, was destined for the payment of the troops in Arabia, and its failure to reach its destination will no doubt complicate the situation. It is not impossible therefore that the prevailing conditions in the Yêmen may shortly become a factor in determining the prospects of peace.

I have, &c.
RENNELL RODD.

[51595] No. 16.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, January 13, 1912.*

WITH reference to the letter from this Office of the 3rd November and previous correspondence relative to the unsatisfactory attitude of the Turkish Government towards British interests in Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople offering his observations on the subject.*

I am to state that Sir E. Grey concurs generally in the views expressed in Sir G. Lowther's useful and timely despatch, which furnishes a justification of the policy pursued by His Majesty's Government in dealing with this question, which has happily now assumed a less serious aspect.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[1922] No. 17.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 15.)

(No. 22.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 9, 1912.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 959 of the 27th December last, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Jerusalem, reporting on military movements in the Gaza district.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 17.

Consul Satow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 93. Confidential.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, December 26, 1911.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 89 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to report some further information, received by me from the British consular agent at Gaza, as to military movements in that district.

* Part IV, No. 152.

On the 11th instant a caravan of 100 unloaded camels, escorted by twenty-five muleteer soldiers, reached Gaza from Dera'a. The escort returned to that place. According to one of the men of the escort, these camels are for riding purposes.

A Bedouin had reported to M. Knesevich that on the 10th instant he had seen a party of soldiers, whose strength he estimated at 400 men, with about the same number of camels, encamped at Beit-Jerjat, about 12 miles north-east of Gaza, and that they had moved to the south towards Beersheba. The men were clothed in different styles, some in Damascus and others in Bedouin dress.

On the 21st instant five more Turkish officers arrived at Gaza; 33 tents have now been pitched—20 among the dunes and 13 on the barrack square. About 400 camels in all have arrived. The coming and going of officers and men continues. The men and some of the officers are letting their beards grow, and the camel saddles are being repaired, and other preparations as if for a journey are being made.

M. Knesevich has heard that it is intended that the troops shall pass secretly in small bodies through Egyptian territory to some spot on the Suez Canal, where they will concentrate and then make their way with the help of the natives to Tripoli. The barrels of their rifles would be disconnected from the stocks and concealed in the camel saddles.

Shakib Bey Arslan, whose departure was referred to in the penultimate paragraph of my despatch No. 89, passed through Rafah on the 17th instant. Although he stated to the frontier police that he was a merchant proceeding to Egypt on business, it is believed that his visit is in connection with an attempt to pass Turkish troops through Egyptian territory.

I have reported the above information exactly as received from M. Knesevich. From the mysterious manner in which the movements are being carried out, it would appear that some attempt to pass not only officers but also men to Tripoli by way of Egypt is really contemplated.

As there is only a bi-weekly post from Gaza, and as it might be necessary for M. Knesevich to telegraph information which could not very well be sent *en clair*, I have the honour to request that, if possible, a copy of the Government telegraph code may be supplied for the use of the consular agency at Gaza.

I duly received your Excellency's telegram of the 24th instant, and shall not fail to comply with the instructions contained therein. As M. Knesevich has already communicated to Parker Bey, Mudir of Sinai, the information contained in this despatch, I have not thought it necessary to do more than send a copy of it to the British agency at Cairo.

I have, &c.
H. E. SATOW.

[1923] No. 18.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 15.)

(No. 23.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January* 9, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah respecting the position of the British and Turkish lights at the outer bar of the Shatt-el-Arab.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 18.

Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 58.)
Sir, *Bussorah, December* 10, 1911.

I HAVE the honour to enclose a photograph,* kindly supplied me by Mr. Denne, first officer of the steam-ship "Dumra," of the Turkish light-ship (the old "Kilid-el-Bahr") stationed at the outer bar about 18 miles from Fao, showing a 5-second revolving light visible about 10 miles away in ordinary weather, but on exceptionally clear nights, such as the 6th December last, when I passed her, visible at 16 miles. The

* Not reproduced.

commander of the "Dumra" informed me that this light was of great use to navigation, but as it is anchored about half-a-mile from the British gas buoy, there are now two lights at the outer bar, and this is unnecessary. The commander seemed to think that, as the Turkish authorities had placed their light-vessel to mark the entrance to the shallows, the British gas buoy would serve a more useful purpose if removed to the position now occupied by the old outer bar buoy, that is, I believe, about 2 miles riverwards from the light-ship, as at present it appears to be eclipsed by the Turkish light-ship; and he stated that, if this suggestion were carried out, it would be possible for ships to negotiate the bar on the darkest night, while now, unless there is a moon, the vessel runs a risk of fouling the buoys or going ashore on a bad place.

I give these suggestions for what they are worth, but they appear to me reasonable. The numerous Turkish and British buoys no doubt make navigation difficult on dark nights, and as two lights now exist, it seems a mistake to put them so close together.

I have, &c.
F. E. CROW.

[1924] No. 19.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(*Received January* 15.)

(No. 24.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January* 9, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Jerusalem respecting the condition of the town of Kerak.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 19.

Consul Satow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 92.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, December* 23, 1911.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the following information as to the condition of the town of Kerak, which I have received from an English resident in this city who has recently visited the district. Although the town is not in this consular district, the information may be of some interest:—

My informant states that the town has not recovered from the effects of last year's rising, and that it is in a practically semi-ruined condition. The houses of the Moslem Arabs suffered the most, and there is scarcely one with a whole door. These, and even in some cases the very roof-beams, were removed by the troops for use as fuel during last winter.

Soldiers are still quartered in the houses and shops of the Christians. It is difficult to understand why this should be the case, as there is plenty of room for them in the castle, unless it be that the authorities wished to show no undue discrimination in their treatment of the various elements of the population.

Very lurid stories are current as to the cruel measures of reprisal taken by the military authorities. These are no doubt in some cases much exaggerated, but they are, nevertheless, firmly believed, and do not tend towards any friendly feeling between the governed and their governors. Many families have missing members of whose whereabouts they are ignorant, and the local belief is that about 1,500 persons were put to death, often in very cruel circumstances, in batches of fifteen to twenty at a time.

The trade of the place is at a standstill. Persons whose shops or houses were looted during the rising were made to swear to the amount of their losses, from which a deduction of 25 per cent. was then made. Those who were not exceptionally favoured, for some reason or other, then received a sum which was supposed to represent the 7 per cent. of the amount thus arrived at, with the promise that the balance would be paid at some future date.

Public security is bad, and communication with the Hedjaz Railway at Katrani is only possible under military escort. Parties of troops are sent out each day to escort would-be travellers. The Bedouins occasionally venture to molest the troops. It is believed that men of the Mejelleh tribe are the offenders.

My informant, who proceeded as far south as Ma'an, reports that everywhere he found the Bedouins keenly interested in the war, the existence of which had been brought home to them by the Italian bombardment of Akabah. They, not unnaturally, look upon it as being exclusively a struggle between Moslem and Christian.

I have, &c.
H. E. SATOW.

[52347] No. 20.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 15.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 15, 1912.

SIR A. NICOLSON asked the Turkish Ambassador on the 15th ultimo when we might expect a reply from his Government to our Bagdad Railway proposals, observing that a considerable time had elapsed since we had communicated them. Tewfik Pasha said that he had written three days before to expedite matters, and that he would do so again.

Sir A. Nicolson did not enter into any details as to participation, &c., the moment not being opportune, and, moreover, it would be well to obtain in writing whatever objections the Turkish Government may have.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[1717] No. 21.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 18.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Foreign Office, January* 16, 1912.

YOUR telegram No. 2, Commercial, of 12th January: Bussorah bar.

We are consulting Board of Trade about status of Messrs. Priestman, but Mr. Greenway, representing Anglo-Algerian Steam-ship Company, is not prepared to undertake the work (see Bussorah despatch No. 55 of 31st October) unless an Anglo-Turkish commission is appointed to supervise and levy tolls, and, as we have approved this attitude, it would hardly be equitable to encourage another British firm to step in without such a commission.

The best course is to urge the Turkish Government to send a reply to our memorandum of July 1911, and your Excellency should express the hope that Turkish Ambassador will soon be authorised to send in a reply, and, in the meantime, you should instruct the consul at Bussorah not to press the matter, but to report at once if there is any indication of the contract passing to a foreign firm.

[1723] No. 22.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 18, 1912.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 922 of the 13th December, 1911, respecting the abortive negotiations for an alteration of the alignment of the Bagdad Railway between Mosul and Bagdad.

I now transmit to you a letter from the Board of Trade containing certain observations on your above-named despatch.*

Your Excellency will perceive, from paragraph 3 of this enclosure, that the Board consider you are under some misapprehension as to their views respecting the possibility of discrimination against British goods on the German lines: it was precisely in order to lessen the risk of such discrimination that paragraph 5 (section i) was inserted in my memorandum of the 29th July, 1911, to the Ottoman Ambassador, and that the assent of His Majesty's Government to the levy of the customs increase is made conditional upon the due observance of an agreement respecting, amongst other

* Board of Trade, January 12, 1912.

points, equality of treatment for British goods in regard to transport facilities and other matters.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[1923] No. 23.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, [*Foreign Office, January* 19, 1912.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople,* forwarding copy of a report from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah, suggesting a change in the position of the British gas buoy, which is at present placed near the Turkish light-ship at the outer bar of the Shatt-el-Arab, about 18 miles from Fao.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive any observations which the Marquess of Crewe may have to offer respecting Mr. Crow's proposal.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[2864] No. 24.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January* 17, 1912.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 2, Commercial, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah respecting the Khandak Creek.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 24.

Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 60.)
Sir, *Bussorah, December* 22, 1911.

WITH reference to my telegram of yesterday, I have the honour to enclose copy of a joint letter addressed to me by the representatives of Messrs. Strick, Scott, and Co., and the Bussorah Trading Company, complaining of the delay caused to their business by the present condition of the Khandak Creek.

Mr. George Lloyd called attention to this matter in his report on British trade in Mesopotamia in 1908. I have not failed before and since that date to make repeated representations on this subject to the local authorities, but as the petitioners remark, my efforts have proved quite futile. At Bussorah two main creeks run into the river, viz., the Ashar Creek leading into the heart of the native city, and the Khandak, about half a mile further to the north. The bit of land between these two is covered with date plantations, except its river front, where lies the quarter called Magam. Both creeks are very shallow at low water but deep with strong currents running at other times. The rise and fall of the river and creeks with the tide are from 6 to 9 feet. Khandak Creek is the seat of the grain business. There is a subsidiary custom-house at the upper end of it, and its banks are lined with grain yards and depôts, with a fleet of lighters, sefinas, and other sailing craft moored to its banks. The creek requires annual dredging to keep it in order and enable the boats to pass up and down without encumbrance, for the traffic is large. As far as I am aware it has not been dredged or cleaned for many years, certainly not since 1903, when I first came here, and at the low river season, as at present, the block is a formidable one. Mr. Darby informs me that the matter is a serious one for grain shippers, and that now the water from the Euphrates has been stopped from passing down the creek, the free channel which formerly existed is hopelessly closed. It really needs thoroughly dredging or digging

* No. 18.

out and it would not be difficult for the municipality to do the work. Two years ago similar work was done in the Ashar Creek, and the job is not a big one. Mr. Darby informed me on the 19th instant that for two days no laden boats had been able to come out or empty lighters to go in. About 150 laden sefinas arrived on the 17th from up river and rushed the entrance of the creek, so that, the tides being low, no movement could be made either one way or the other. The "Serbistan" and the "Anatolia" are both awaiting grain cargo, and are due to sail with the fortnightly high tide before the end of this month.

At my request the acting vali, to whom I explained the position, sent some gendarmes to try and clear a passage by force for the laden lighters now waiting and a few managed to get out. The Turkish authorities are, as usual, apathetic in the matter of making any permanent improvement. The only means of effecting it are to dig out the mud and clean and deepen the channel. The water will be low for the next two and a-half months, and this is therefore the time for undertaking the work. Some additional pressure is required to induce them to give the matter the attention it deserves, and I hope your Excellency may be able to cause telegraphic instructions to be sent to the local authorities to take the necessary steps for improving the condition of the Khandak Creek with the least possible delay.

I have, &c.
F. E. CROW.

Enclosure 2 in No. 24.

Joint Letter addressed to Consul Crow.

Sir, *Bussorah, December* 21, 1911.

WE have again to bring to your notice the deplorable condition of the Khandak Creek, and the serious losses which British merchants and shippers are experiencing, owing :—

1. To absence of any attempts on the part of Turkish authorities for regulating traffic in and out.

2. The silting up of the creek.

Practically all grain arriving from up-river is stored on seefs inside the creek. Owing to the enormous arrivals of craft laden with grain, no loaded boats for steamers have been able to get out for the last three days, resulting in loss of tide at the bar to steamers in port.

Representations, which you have made on many occasions to the local government, have proved quite futile.

May we request you to be good enough to telegraph the embassy at Constantinople the urgent necessity for immediate action, in order to remedy an evil which is an absolute disgrace to this country, and a serious menace to British interests in view of the growing trade in grain.

Yesterday, by great efforts on the part of the authorities, the traffic was partly regulated, but is almost in the same impossible position to-day.

Thanking you in anticipation,

We are, &c.
(For Strick, Scott and Co., Limited),
C. DARBY, *Manager.*

(For the Bussorah Trading Co., Limited),
R. D. MARSHAL, *Manager.*

[2866] No. 25.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January* 17, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from the British acting vice-consul at Mosul respecting the Bagdad Railway.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[2865] No. 24*.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)

(No. 41.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January* 17, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah reporting the proposed strengthening of the Fao fort and garrison.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 24*.

Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 61.)
Sir, *Bussorah, December* 22, 1911.

I AM informed that the military authorities here have received orders to strengthen all military posts near Bussorah, especially the Fao fort garrison. Lately 200 recruits were sent from Bagdad, of whom 50 landed at Amara and the remaining 150 proceeded to Bussorah on the 16th instant; 80 men of the "Cadro Boluki" also arrived from Bagdad the same week. The 1st Battalion of the 112th Regiment now consists of 350 men, some of whom are posted at Zobeir, Sefwan, Um Kasr, and Bubian Island, 40 of them, I hear to-day, being stationed at Fao. There are also, I believe, 10 gendarmes at the Fao fort, but no guns are mounted there yet. The 30th Nishangi Regiment now consists of 350 men, so the total strength of the infantry force at and near Bussorah now numbers 930 men. It is stated that more will be sent.

An evidently inspired article in the "Reshad," a local newspaper, dated the 1st (14th) December, draws the attention of the authorities to the urgent necessity of fortifying Fao as "the vital spot in all Irak and Mesopotamia," and dwells on the importance of keeping new guns, trained soldiers of the line, and provisions there, "for we are in the lion's claws, i.e., those of all the west, and shall become its prey."

The vali, Hassan Reza Bey, is now at Amara, where he is spending a few days before returning to Bussorah.

I have, &c.
F. E. CROW.

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Enclosure in No. 25.

Acting Vice-Consul Hony to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 39.)

Sir, *Mosul, December* 22, 1911.

I HAVE the honour to report to you that Meissner Pasha, who leaves to-day for Bagdad, called on me this morning. He said that the railway could not reach Mosul in less than two years. Under the present conditions of transport it could not possibly be completed to Bagdad in four years. But negotiations are now going on with Lynch and the Nahriyé and the Bagdad Railway Company for a fusion; each is to have a third share in the navigation of the Tigris; new boats will be put on; these will doubtless be built in England, as the contract for them is to be given to Lynch; the amalgamated companies wish to profit by Lynch's experience in this connection. Thus, the transport facilities will be increased and the progress of the Bagdad Railway correspondingly accelerated. Lynch, he said, was quite favourable to the scheme: he was doubtless afraid that if he did not become a party to it, some other arrangement would be arrived at for the transport of materials up the Tigris in which he would have no share at all.

I have, &c.
HENRY C. HONY.

[2879] No. 26.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)

(No. 54.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January* 17, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith paraphrase of a telegram from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah respecting the contract for the dredging of the bar of the Shatt-el-Arab.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER

Enclosure in No. 26.

Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bussorah, January* 15, 1912.

DREDGING of bar. Please see my telegram of the 8th instant.

A telegram has been received by agent of Messrs. Strick, instructing him to apply for dredging concession on behalf of Anglo-Turkish Board; this board to consist of Lamb, British consul, agent himself, and two representatives, and to have power to levy dues and to raise capital. The telegram further stated that Strick, Scott, and Company would contract with the board for dredging as soon as it had been formed and approved by the British Government and the Porte.

I request instructions in the event of my being required to give my personal assistance in this matter. The Turkish members should, in my opinion, be commodore and vali, but I question whether it is likely that preponderance of votes as regards levy of dues will be allowed us by the Turks.

I have not exact figures for 1911, but percentages of British steam-ships and steamers' tonnage for that year were probably greater than in the preceding year, when they were respectively 87 per cent. and 81 per cent.

[3244] No. 27.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 23, 1912.

YOUR telegram No. 18 of 16th January: Bussorah bar.

Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me that he hopes in about ten days to be able to hand to the Councillor of the Embassy in London, now here, reply to Bagdad Railway and Persian Gulf questions.

Speaking for himself only, the difficulties he foresaw were our proposed distribution of shares in the new railway and the withdrawal of Turkish military post from Bubiyan. The Cabinet had not yet decided whether Bussorah or Koweit would be the better terminus.

[3077] No. 28.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 25.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 23, 1912.

ON the 20th instant, Sir A. Nicolson took the opportunity of a visit from Tewfik Pasha to enquire when Djevad Bey was expected back from Constantinople, as His Majesty's Government were desirous of commencing negotiations in respect to the Bagdad Railway and the Persian Gulf.

His Highness replied that he had been continually urging his Government to give us their counter-proposals, and they had always replied that their time was entirely occupied by parliamentary duties. Now that the Chambers were dissolved, he expected that Djevad Bey would very shortly return with full instructions. Sir A. Nicolson said that he hoped that this would be the case, as we were anxious that no further delay should ensue.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

[3369] No. 29.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 24.)

Sir, *India Office, January* 23, 1912.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, enclosing copy of a despatch No. 949 of the 22nd December last from His Majesty's Minister, Constantinople, on the subject of British interests in Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, and to say that the Secretary of State for India concurs in the view expressed by Sir E. Grey as to the effect on the immediate situation of the improvement shown by Sir G. Lowther's despatch to have taken place in the general attitude of the Turkish Government since the various incidents occurred which called forth the Government of India's telegram of the 12th October. In particular, the payment (of which Lord Crewe was not aware) of Messrs. Lynch's claim, though long delayed, is very satisfactory.

His Majesty's consul-general at Bagdad, in his monthly summary for October 1911, also notes this improvement, and is of opinion that it "is largely due to Turkish foreign difficulties." Whether that be so or not, the Secretary of State for India trusts that when the stress of those difficulties is removed, it will be found that our relations with Turkey in those regions are on a permanently satisfactory basis.

I am, &c.

R. RITCHIE.

[3621] No. 30.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 26.)

(Secret.)

Sir, *India Office, January* 25, 1912.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 29th December last, requesting his observations on a letter from the Treasury, dated the 21st idem, regarding the expenditure on a scheme of lighting and buoyage in the Persian Gulf.

2. In reply, I am to remark that the course of the recent correspondence is not accurately represented in the Treasury letter, and, in particular, the Secretary of State for India does not understand the allusion to "the discrepant and varying statements as to the places where provision of buoyage, &c., is of primary importance."

[3277] No. 28*.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 24.)

(No. 59.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January* 20, 1912.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 42 of the 17th instant relative to a proposed combination between Messrs. Lynch, the Shirket Nahriye, and the Bagdad Railway Company, I have the honour to inform you that I have received a telegram from His Majesty's acting consul-general at Bagdad to the effect that he has been informed by Messrs. Lynch's agent that negotiations for such a combination are in progress.

Mr. Scott adds that the local authorities have issued a notice to the effect that, after the expiration of three months, with the exception of Messrs. Lynch's steamers, only Turkish shipping, including native boats, will be permitted on the Tigris.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

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3. In the letter of this Office, dated the 15th September last, it was recommended that sanction should be given to expenditure amounting, according to the most accurate data obtainable, to—

	£
Initial	47,600
Annual, recurring	2,490

for the provision of—

(1.) An acetylene gas buoy, and one light-vessel in the Shatt-el-Arab;
(2.) Light houses at Musandim, Tanb Island, and Shaikh Shuaib Island; and
(3.) A light-vessel for Bushire.

It was also explained (in paragraph 4) that some additional buoys might be necessary, as to which enquiry was being made in a telegram addressed to the Government of India on the 13th September.

4. The second letter of this Office, dated the 18th November last, supplemented the first by recommending that the buoys in question (of which a list was given) should be actually laid, at an estimated cost of—

	£
Initial	2,800
Annual, recurring	210

For convenience of reference, prints of the two letters are herewith enclosed.*

5. With regard to what is said in the Treasury letter as to the lighting of Bushire, I am to invite attention to paragraph 9 of the report of the committee, dated the 29th April, 1909, from which it will be seen that they recommended—

(1.) A light-vessel at the outer anchorage;
(2.) A lighted buoy at the inner anchorage.

The former was included in the statement enclosed in the letter of this Office, dated the 15th September, the latter in the list of buoys accompanying the letter of the 18th November. In their letter of the 28th October last, the Lords Commissioners raised the question whether a light-buoy could not be substituted for the light-vessel proposed at the outer anchorage at Bushire, but the question of the light-buoy at the inner anchorage, recommended in the telegram of the Government of India, dated the 30th September last, was not thereby affected. No authority can be discovered for the statement of the Lords Commissioners that "Bushire alone requires one lighted buoy as a matter of urgency." On the contrary, it clearly appears from the telegram which they themselves quote that such buoys are urgently required at Bahrein and Bunder Abbas as well, as is also shown in the list enclosed in my letter of 18th November.

6. The Secretary of State trusts that the foregoing explanations will remove the misapprehension which now exists. He concurs in the view that it is desirable that, so far as possible, His Majesty's Government should be in possession of a complete scheme of the lighting and buoyage of the Gulf before the project is actually proceeded with, but he trusts he has made it plain that in my letters of the 15th September and the 18th November, taken in connection with the previous correspondence, they already had such a scheme before them. There is only one item of the recommendations made by the committee of 1909 which has not been discussed in the telegrams from the Government of India or the letters addressed to your department, viz., the provision of a depôt for the maintenance of the lights and buoys. As your department is aware, the cost of the depôt was estimated at 22,000*l.* by Mr. Hood in his supplementary report dealing with the financial aspects of the committee's proposals. The matter has not been touched upon since, because it was necessary, in the first instance, to settle the particular lights and buoys for the maintenance of which the depôt would be required. As the committee's scheme for lighting and buoyage was on a larger scale than that now proposed, it may be hoped that the cost of the depôt will be less than the original estimate of 22,000*l.* The point is dealt with in the telegram, dated the 23rd January, 1912, addressed to the Government of India, of which copy is transmitted.

It will thus be seen that the only part of the scheme which has not been put before the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury in my letter of the 15th September, supplemented by that of the 18th November, is the depôt.

* Letters of 15th September and 18th November, 1911.

7. Their Lordships will now be aware that the total expenditure on the complete scheme is estimated not to exceed—

	£
Initial	102,400
Annual, recurring	7,700

made up as follows:—

—	Initial.	Annual, recurring.
	£	£
Proposals for lights recommended in India Office letter of the 15th September, 1911	47,600	2,490
Light-house tender (proposed in same letter if less costly arrangements impracticable)	30,000	5,000
Proposals for buoys recommended in India Office letter of the 16th November, 1911	2,800	210
Depôt—probably less than	22,000	(Included in figures above.)
Total	102,400	7,700

8. As Sir Edward Grey is aware, it was the extreme desirability of anticipating the possible action of other Powers that has all along caused this Office to press this scheme upon His Majesty's Government. It is, therefore, hoped that the Lords Commissioners will, in view of the political considerations involved, no longer think it necessary to withhold their sanction, but will accept as a charge against British revenues a moiety of the expenditure estimated as above, on the distinct understanding that every effort will be made to avoid or reduce the expenditure on the tender and the depôt, and that the suggestions made in their letter of the 28th October, 1911, will, if possible, be adopted.

I am, &c.
LIONEL ABRAHAMS.

Enclosure in No. 30.

The Marquess of Crewe to the Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) T. *India Office, January* 23, 1912.

I AM awaiting reply to questions raised in my telegram, dated 16th November, regarding Persian Gulf. Should not our estimates also include initial cost of a depôt? And, if so, what amount should be included? 22,000*l.* was the figure for depôt for a larger scheme, as given in Mr. Hood's report. It will be borne in mind that scheme must not exceed bare requirements of our policy, in view of necessity for the utmost economy. A reply as soon as possible by telegraph is solicited.

[3930]

No. 31.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 56.)

Sir, *Constantinople, January* 10, 1912.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 855 of the 24th November ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Erzeroum, reporting that the French financiers have declined to take up the scheme for the working of the lignite deposits in the vilayet of Erzeroum, partly on account of the exorbitant terms proposed, but mainly on account of the want of confidence in Turkish stability.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER

[3277] No. 32*.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, January 30, 1912.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 59 of the 20th instant, in which you report the contents of a telegram from His Majesty's acting consul-general at Bagdad to the effect that the Turkish local authorities have issued a notice excluding, after the expiration of three months, all foreign vessels from the River Tigris with the exception of those of Messrs. Lynch.

I enclose a memorandum, prepared in this Office in 1907, respecting British rights in regard to the navigation of the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates.*

In view of the considerations set forth in this document, I should be glad to learn whether your Excellency holds the action of the Turkish local authorities to be an infringement of foreign rights.

If your Excellency considers this to be the case, I should further be glad to learn whether you are of opinion that it would be expedient to raise the subject from the point of view of British interests, or whether you apprehend that it might possibly involve some risk of foreign competition on the Tigris to do so?

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

* Memorandum, February 4, 1907 [8852].

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Enclosure in No. 31.

Consul McGregor to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 3.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January 6, 1912.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 90 of the 15th November last I have the honour to report to your Excellency that, according to a statement made to me by the French vice-consul, M. Destrées, the negotiations between the holders of "permis de recherche" for lignite in this vilayet, and certain Parisian capitalists have proved a complete fiasco, partly on account of the exorbitant terms proposed by the holders, but mainly on account of want of confidence in Turkish stability.

I have, &c.
P. J. C. McGREGOR.

[3933] No. 32.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 60. Confidential.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 18, 1912.*

IN my despatch No. 871 of the 23rd November last I had the honour to report to you on the adjournment of the debate on the Chester scheme in the Ottoman Chamber until after Bairam. The scheme has not come up for discussion again since then, but I am informed that shortly before Christmas the American Ambassador here made strong representations at the Porte relative to the treatment which Mr. Chester had received at the hands of the Turkish Government.

It appears that after the Minister of Public Works, whose apparent anxiety to wreck the Chester scheme has been generally attributed to his having been won over to German interests, made his speech in the House, as reported in my above-mentioned despatch, he addressed an official request to the Grand Vizier for the return of the Chester dossier to the Porte. Houloussi Bey pointed out at the same time that the proposed railway ought to be built by the Government and that mining rights to the extent involved in the Chester scheme should never be given to a foreign syndicate. He proposed that a survey of the *tracé* should be made and that the lines which would be useful should be constructed with normal gauge by a foreign contractor on Government account.

In the meanwhile my American colleague, who has hitherto been inclined to disinterest himself in the matter, made certain representations to the Porte, presumably, on instructions from Washington, in consequence of which Houloussa Bey's proposals would seem to have been shelved. The Turkish Ambassador in Washington has likewise, I hear, informed Assim Bey that the American Government have intimated to him that the rejection of the Chester scheme would be regarded by them as an unfriendly act, and that the existence of American interests in this country ought to be looked upon as a guarantee against undue aggression on the part of Russia and Germany.

As a result of these representations, the Chester scheme has been several times of late before the Council of Ministers; the Armenian Taschnak party are believed to be greatly in favour of its acceptance, and as the Committee of Union and Progress party will presumably require the support of this party now more than ever before, there seems to be still a chance of the scheme being ultimately carried through.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[4950] No. 33.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 5.)

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Constantinople, January 29, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Erzerum respecting affairs in the vilayet of Bitlis.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No 33.

Consul McGregor to Sir G. Louther.

(No. 1.)

Erzerum, January 15, 1912.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith an extract from a letter which I have received from one of the American missionaries at Bitlis describing the conditions of the districts of Guzeldereh, Akhlat, and Bulanik, which he has recently visited, and mentioning the fact that troops are being dispatched to Van from the vilayet of Bitlis.

Your Excellency will observe that in several instances the Armenian villagers have successfully taken the law into their own hands, and in this connection I should mention that, thanks to the efforts of the Armenian school teachers at Bitlis and other Tashnakist agents, the Christian population of the vilayet, and more particularly of the Mush district, is now said to be well supplied with fire-arms. The collection of funds for this purpose is being actively carried on at Erzerum, and, in view of the impotence, or worse, of the local authorities, it is a measure which it would be difficult to condemn.

I have, &c.

P. J. C. McGREGOR.

Enclosure 2 in No. 33.

Extract from Rev. G. P. Knapp's private letter dated Bitlis, 30th December, 1911.

TO-DAY week I returned from a tour of three weeks in the Guzeldereh, Akhlat, and Bodanyk districts, where I visited some twenty-five villages. I found that the Armenian villages were in considerable fear of attacks by the Koords, and were keeping up patrols of young men during the night. In Southern Bodanyk especially there was a good deal of fear since the affair of Molakand, of which you have doubtless heard the details. There seems to be no doubt that Haji Mousa Beg, or his brothers Khusum or Noe Begs, were responsible for the attack on and looting of the Armenian store in that village and the murder of one of the three brothers who owned it. Later a shop was attacked in a Koordish village on the eastern part of Moosh Plain. Some of the villagers pursued the robbers who were carrying away the booty and shot two of them, who were identified as Khusum Beg's men. The acting Vali issued stringent orders to capture Mousa Beg and his brothers, but things were so manipulated that by the time the soldiers surrounded their houses at Yevner all three Begs had escaped with their families and belongings.

The night I spent at Dopavank the patrol repulsed an attack of robbers. At early dawn the previous Sunday a horse was abstracted from one of the stables. Someone from within the village (as at Troy) seems to have opened the door to let the animal out. You will probably remember that it was this village of 200 houses which some months ago appealed to the Russian consulate here offering to enter the Orthodox Church and become Russian subjects.

Malove, the famous brigand and murderer of Modgan, a nephew and a servant have been killed by fellow Koords.

Soldiers are being sent as rapidly as possible to Van, seemingly for the Persian frontier. When I was at Gope soldiers had lately arrived who had been in the skirmish with Saiced Beg's men. The Koords had killed four soldiers and captured ten rifles.

The Gope Kaïmakam has been removed to a station in the Moosh district, and the Avrak Mudiri here is now the acting Kaïmakam.

The Ihtiabat are being called out, and there is much dolging and wailing, especially in Armenian families. The snow which is just setting in may abate the vigour with which these reserves are being collected.

[4963] No. 34.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 5.)

(No. 97.)

Constantinople, January 31, 1912.

Sir,

I NOTICE a statement in the "Tribuna" to the effect that there are 5,000 Turkish troops absolutely destitute in the neighbourhood of Hodeidah, unable to return

by sea on account of the Italian ships of war or by land on account of the Yemen Arabs.

I happened to be speaking to the Minister of War on this subject two days ago, and he said that he had no anxiety on account of these men, as they were now enjoying the comparative cool of those regions and had ample food.

It was true that they could not be repatriated as they were prevented from returning by sea owing to the Italian ships, and he could not send them by land as it would entail a forty days' march through the desert.

What, however, did distress him much was that they had a large number of invalids at and in the neighbourhood of Hodeidah, whom they could not repatriate owing to the inhuman practice adopted by the Italian Government of not even allowing hospital ships to pass, in one case even after such permission had been accorded.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

[5242] No. 35.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 101.)

Constantinople, February 2, 1912.

Sir,

BY your despatch No. 7 of the 5th ultimo, I am informed that Mr. D'Arcy has notified that he as well as his friends continues to take an interest in the oil-fields in the Mosul region of Mesopotamia, and that while as anxious as ever to secure the concession of these oil-fields, the information they have received would indicate that the present moment is not a favourable one for pressing their negotiations.

It will be within your recollection that the negotiations which Mr. Nichols had undertaken with the Turkish Government on behalf of Mr. D'Arcy, with the object of securing the concession of the oil-fields in question, have been more or less in a state of suspension ever since the railway and mining scheme, first proposed by Dr. Glasgow in 1909 and afterwards by Mr. Chester, came forward, and received attention at the hands of the Government and the Chamber. No progress could apparently be made in any negotiations for the oil concession until the Government had come to a definite decision with regard to either the acceptance or rejection of Mr. Chester's offer, and Mr. Nichols consequently took no active steps, and has awaited the final result of the negotiations between the American syndicate and the Government.

Matters were so far advanced in May last that Hakki Pasha, then Grand Vizier, in answer to a question in the Chamber, stated that all the documents relative to the Chester scheme were ready, and would be laid before the House before the end of the session. Parliament rose for the summer vacation early in June without, however, having had an opportunity of discussing the Chester project, but Hakki Pasha promised that this subject would be one of the first to engage the attention of members when the House met in the autumn.

An opportunity was found by the ex-Minister for Public Works, Houlousi Bey, for bringing the question before the Chamber in November last, and the discussions which ensued occupied three sittings. It was evident, however, from the tone of the Minister's speeches, that he, if not the Cabinet, was unfavourably disposed towards the scheme. No decision was arrived at, and all the documents relative to the concession were at the request of the Grand Vizier, Said Pasha, withdrawn from Parliament and returned to the Sublime Porte only a few days before the dissolution of the House. This last move created a general impression that the Chester project had been definitely set aside, and, had this been really the case, I should have considered the moment most opportune for the reopening of negotiations by Mr. Nichols. In view, however, of the absence of any parliamentary decision, and of certain information which has reached me privately, and which tends to show that some kind of pressure has been exercised by the United States Government on the Porte in order that a decision favourable to Mr. Chester should be given, as reported in my despatch No. 60 of the 18th January, I am reluctantly forced to conclude that nothing could usefully be done to promote Mr. D'Arcy's interests at the present stage.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

[5390] No. 36.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 7.)

(No. 103.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 2, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of the despatch No. 20 of the 18th instant, in which you were so good as to forward to me copy of a letter from the Board of Trade containing observations on some of the points raised in my despatch No. 922 of the 13th December last on the question of the results to our interests of a change of the *tracé* of the Bagdad Railway between Mosul and Bagdad, bringing Khanikin on to the trunk line. The application of the German company for this alteration having been rejected by the Turkish Government these questions become of rather academic interest, but I desire nevertheless to offer a few observations on the Board's letter.

The Board were of opinion that the suggested change would not be detrimental to British interests because, among other reasons, if the Bagdad-Khanikin section were built before the remainder of the line, British trade from the south would naturally be benefited. This is, of course, perfectly true, but it does not state the whole case. British trade would not be benefited any more than that of any other country—than that of Germany, for instance, and German trade would have the additional advantage of being carried by a German-managed railway, one of whose cardinal principles is to further German interests in every possible manner. I am quite aware that German transit trade to Persia is at present insignificant as compared with our own; but we have to look to the future, and to the probability that Germany, with its subsidised line of steamers to the Persian Gulf and its railway in Turkey and interest in the future railways system in Northern Persia, will at no distant date make a great effort to capture the markets of those regions. The Germans, to use a homely phrase, play a very close game, and we cannot afford to give away any points.

I regret that the Board of Trade should have been led to think that I am under a misapprehension as to its views with regard to the possibility of discrimination against British goods on the German lines. My appreciation of their views has been chiefly formed from their letter to your department of the 7th April last, from which I gathered that they believed that such discrimination, at all events in the matter of tariffs, could be fairly effectively guarded against by a written agreement, and I merely meant in my despatch No. 922 above mentioned to convey that my knowledge of German railway management in this country did not allow me to place an equal amount of faith in the efficacy of such safeguards. The Board of Trade go on to say that they fail to see how the risk of discrimination would be increased, so far as the Bagdad-Khanikin route is concerned, if that route were served by a main line instead of a branch line. This point is, I may observe, answered by anticipation by the concluding sentences of the first paragraph of my despatch No. 922, where I drew attention to the possibility of a direct line from Bagdad to Khanikin being built by the contemplated international company which is to undertake the Gulf-Bagdad section, an arrangement which would give us complete security for the transport of our merchandise from the Gulf to the Persian frontier. It is obvious that if the Germans had succeeded in obtaining the alteration of the *tracé* this possibility would have disappeared.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[2865] No. 37.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 52.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 7, 1912.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch No. 41 of the 17th ultimo, relative to the strengthening of Turkish military posts near Bussorah, I have to inform you that any increase of the garrison on Bubian Island would be the occasion of a protest on the part of His Majesty's Government, as constituting a violation of the *status quo*.

I have accordingly to request your Excellency to instruct His Majesty's consul at Bussorah to watch the course of events, and to report at once by telegraph should he see any sign of an intention to increase this force.

[6034] No. 38.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 12.)

(No. 107.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 5, 1912.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 88 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Jerusalem, giving further details as to the firing by a warship—presumably Italian—directed against the coast near Rafa.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 38.

Consul Satow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 6.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, January 23, 1912.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 4 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to report that the consular agent at Gaza has sent me a letter received by him from Bimbashi Beamish Bey, Mudir of Sinai, giving an account of the recent firing at Rafa on the 17th instant. This is as follows:—

"It appears that a warship—presumably Italian—came in close to the shore opposite No. 1 boundary pillar, and fired 60 shells directed chiefly at the high ground behind our office. Most of the shells burst quite close to the boundary line on Turkish territory, one bursting on our side. No one landed from the ship, and there was no firing from the Turkish post here. The ship remained about an hour and then proceeded westwards."

No explanation has been forthcoming as to the meaning of this firing.

I have, &c.
H. E. SATOW.

[6040] No. 39.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 12.)

(No. 114.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 7, 1912.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 45 of the 17th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Jerusalem, giving items of military information from Gaza.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 39.

Consul Satow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, January 26, 1912.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 2, Confidential, of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report that, according to the information received by me from the consular agent at Gaza, the Ottoman military authorities appear to be of the opinion that, in view of the measures taken by the Egyptian Government, the secret passage of men and munition of war overland from Gaza to Tripoli is no longer possible, and that they have therefore given up the idea.

Mr. Knesevich states that many of the Bedouin costumes bought for the purpose of disguise have been sold, as have been fifty-seven baggage camels. The latter were bought by a local merchant, who sent them to Egypt on the 21st to be disposed of there.

A detachment of the Damascus troops left Gaza on the 12th to return to that city, taking with them a certain number of camels.

There are now in Gaza 100 camel corps men with 100 riding and 50 baggage camels. Mr. Knesevich will report to me when he can obtain any definite information as to their intentions.

He has been in constant communication by safe channels with the Mudir of Sinai, to whom he has sent all available information.

He repeats that, to the best of his belief, about 1,000 men in all crossed the frontier at various points, and that their route was viâ Beersheba and Maan.

I have, &c.
H. E. SATOW.

[6666] No. 40.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 63.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 13, 1912.*

THE Turkish Ambassador gave to Sir A. Nicolson to read on the 13th instant a despatch from his Government, to the effect that the consula rguard relief for Bagdad residency used to arrive without rifles and take over those of the guard to be relieved. Now they arrive with rifles and the departing guard leave theirs behind, and a depôt is thus being created. Furthermore, only two cases annually used to arrive with ammunition, whereas recently twenty-one cases arrived.

Tewfik Pasha's communication was made in a friendly sprit.

Sir A. Nicolson promised his Highness that enquiry would be made into the facts of the case, and I have accordingly to request your Excellency to obtain a report from Mr. Lorimer on the subject.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[6490] No. 41.

The Marquess Imperiali to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 14.)

(Translation.)

THE Italian Ambassador presents his compliments to Sir E. Grey, and, with reference to the latter's memorandum of the 5th January last, has the honour to state that Warner Point is shown on the map of Small Strait, printed on Red Sea sheet No. 5. It is situated immediately to the west of the locality called Turba, and its approximative longitude and latitude are 43° 29′ 25″ East Greenwich and 12° 39′ latitude south.

Italian Embassy, London, February 10, 1912.

[6521] No. 42.

Treasury to Foreign Office.—(Received February 14.)

Sir, *Treasury Chambers, February 13, 1912.*

I HAVE laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury Mr. Mallet's letter of the 5th instant further respecting the scheme of lighting and buoyage in the Persian Gulf, and forwarding a letter from the India Office, dated the 25th ultimo, on the subject. This letter gives the first statement which my Lords have received as to the total expenditure which is involved in the scheme as a whole, and the explanations contained therein have removed the misconception under which they had hitherto laboured, owing to the mistaken belief that the proposals contained in India Office letter of the 18th November last might be taken as being to some extent in substitution of rather than supplementary to the scheme set out in the previous India Office letter of the 18th September. Whilst regretting this misunderstanding, my Lords cannot but feel that, when a costly and complicated scheme is submitted for the approval of Secretary Sir E. Grey and of this Board, its presentation in instalments

is calculated to lead to confusion and militates against proper criticism of the details. For this reason they are glad to be now, for the first time, in possession of the entire scheme and of the report of the Committee on the Lighting and Buoyage of the Persian Gulf, dated the 29th April, 1909.

From the information now before them, my Lords note that the total capital charges for lighting and buoyage are estimated not to exceed 102,400*l.*, and that the annual recurring charges will amount to about 7,700*l.* The above estimate of capital expenditure includes an item of about 22,000*l.* for the provision of a depôt for the maintenance of the lights and buoys, and India Office letter of the 25th ultimo is the first indication my Lords have received of the necessity for this large addition to the capital expenditure involved in undertaking these services in the Persian Gulf. They recognise, however, that if such services be undertaken a depôt is indispensable, but they do not understand why this was not pointed out in the first instance.

As regards the purchase of a lighthouse tender, my Lords are not clear whether the project of employing in its stead the "Patrick Stewart" has been definitely abandoned, but from the enclosures to Foreign Office letter of the 30th November last, it would appear that the difficulties of employing this vessel and the expense involved are so great that the purchase of a tender would be the preferable course. If in the opinion of Sir E. Grey and the Marquess of Crewe this be the case, my Lords are prepared to accept as a charge on the British Exchequer a moiety of the cost of purchase (not exceeding 30,000*l.*) of a tender (and of upkeep, as well as a moiety of the cost of a depôt. They trust, however, that in both cases the strictest regard will be had to economy in capital expenditure.

As regards the provision of lighthouses and buoys, they are also prepared, subject to the general stipulations contained in their letter of the 28th October last, to agree to the proposals contained in India Office letters of the 15th September and the 18th November last, with the exception of the proposals to provide lightships at Shatt-el-Arab and Bushire.

In reference to Shatt-el-Arab, I am again to call attention to the observations contained in Treasury letter of the 28th October last, to which no answer is made in the India Office letter of the 25th ultimo. My Lords gather, from the correspondence forwarded with Foreign Office letter of the 14th October last, that there is already at the outer bar of Shatt-el-Arab an acetylene gas buoy, and as to the utility of this buoy I am to refer to the report of the officer commanding R.I.M.S. "Palinurus," dated the 7th May, 1911 (21274, Eastern Department, Secret Series), in which he says that the buoy is visible at a distance of seven nautical miles in clear weather, and was once observed at a distance of ten miles, and that it enables vessels to make their entrance at night. In view of these facts and the urgent necessity for keeping expenditure to as low a figure as possible, my Lords feel bound to press for a reconsideration of this part of the scheme. If it be considered desirable, my Lords would not object to the provision of a further lightbuoy at Shatt-el-Arab.

As regards the proposal to have a light-vessel stationed in the outer anchorage at Bushire, besides the lightbuoy in the inner anchorage at that place, my Lords must again call Sir E. Grey's attention to the statement of Rear-Admiral Sir E. Slade, quoted in their letter of the 28th October last. They are now aware that the committee of 1909 reported in favour of a lightship, but Admiral Slade's experience is of later date, and he has had the advantage of seeing the lightbuoy at Shatt-el-Arab in operation. In the case, therefore, of Bushire, my Lords would urge the substitution of a lightbuoy for a lightship. If lightbuoys be used here and at Shatt-el-Arab there will be a saving of 17,800*l.* in capital expenditure and of 1,220*l.* in recurrent charges.

Even with such a saving, the total expenditure, representing a capital cost of over 80,000*l.*, with annual recurring charges of about 6,500*l.*, can only be justified by imperative considerations of policy, and it is solely in deference to Sir E. Grey's urgent representations that my Lords have felt able to acquiesce in accepting such a heavy financial responsibility. They must, however, ask that only such works be undertaken as permit of no delay or modification. In the scheme as now put forward, my Lords see little indication that the necessity for economy has been borne in mind, and indeed the total sums involved show a comparatively small decrease from the cost of the original proposals referred to in Foreign Office Secret letter of the 13th May, 1910, which Sir E. Grey and Lord Morley then refused to entertain. My Lords feel, therefore, the more justified in asking that the modifications they have suggested in connection with Bushire and Shatt-el-Arab should be accepted, and that every endeavour should be made to effect further economies in the provision for the building of lighthouses, &c.

My Lords would be glad to learn whether Sir E. Grey is yet in a position

to afford them information on the point raised in the fourth paragraph of Treasury letter of the 28th October last relative to the possibility of an agreement between this country, Turkey, and Persia for the collection of dues.

I am, &c.
T. L. HEATH.

6553] No. 43.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 57.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 14, 1912.

THE Turkish Ambassador called on the 13th instant, and said that, though he did not wish to question Sir A. Nicolson as to Lord Haldane's visit to Berlin, there was one point that he must mention. His Highness had seen an allusion to the Bagdad Railway having been touched upon in conversations at Berlin. His Government sincerely hoped that His Majesty's Government were not going to discuss this question with Germany. The Turkish Government had succeeded in obtaining the renunciation by Germany of the agreement of 1903 in so far as it affected the line between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf, only one condition having been imposed, viz., that no third Power should participate to a greater degree in the capital required than Germany. As the Turkish Government were now engaged in discussions with us as to the Bagdad-Gulf sections, they did not desire German intervention in these discussions, and they trusted we should not open the question with Germany, as the latter Power would only be too glad to re-enter into the enterprise, or demand from Turkey some fresh concessions in return for her abstention.

Sir A. Nicolson said that we were awaiting the Turkish reply to our memorandum of July 1911, and that he was not aware of any intention to admit Germany into the discussions between His Majesty's Government and the Turkish Government.

The Ambassador reiterated the view that, beyond contributing perhaps a certain share of the capital, Germany had no further interest in the Gulf sections.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[7048] No. 44.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 123.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February* 14, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the state of affairs in Kurdistan.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 44.

Consul McGregor to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 7.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January* 25, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a memorandum addressed to me by the dragoman of the Diarbekir vice-consulate regarding the condition of the Diarbekir vilayet, with particular reference to the alleged movement in favour of Kurdish autonomy.

I have, &c.
P. J. C. McGREGOR.

Enclosure 2 in No. 44.

Memorandum.

I HAVE the honour to write for your information that the harvest of the last year was very bad in kazas of Silivan and Busheri, and in the east and west of Diarbekir they could hardly get whatever they sowed. The wheat market is very high. The local "olchey" (16 ocks) of wheat is nearly twice of the price of last year (1910). Everything is very dear this year, and because of lack of trade the people are in extreme anxiety.

The Kurdish movement toward independent Kurdistan is by-and-by taking greater measure. It seems now that other Ashirets are going to join to Bohtan, and we hear from outside that the Kurdish chiefs of Silivan, Busheri, Midyat and Jezireh kazas are in communication with Bitlis and Bohtan Kurds. There is no apparent propaganda, but a very secrete understanding, which has not yet been ripened, in this vilayet.

Again, I am told that Abdulrezzak Bey, Badirkhan Zade, has declared "independence Kurdistan" and himself "Shah" of Kurdistan. The Government has turned great attention to this Kurdish problem, and is in communication with Jezireh and Bitlis.

About 500 loads of ammunition has been sent from Diarbekir to Bitlis during this last month, and all these have been done very quiet and secretly; all these loads are sent out by night.

THOMAS MUGERDITCHIAN.

Diarbekir, 31st December, 1911.

Enclosure 3 in No. 44.

Consul McGregor to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 9.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January* 30, 1912.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 7 of the 25th instant on the subject of the alleged machinations of certain Kurdish emissaries in various districts of the vilayet of Diarbekir, I have the honour to report that, according to information which has reached me from Bitlis, Abdurrezak, the well-known Bedrkhanli chief, who is supposed to enjoy the favour of Russian officialdom, crossed the Russian frontier some five weeks ago, and after spending some time with the notorious Sheikh of Khizan paid a secret visit to the town of Bitlis. I also learn from the same source that Mussa Bey, whom the Turkish authorities made a show of wishing to arrest some weeks ago, has returned to his usual haunts in the Mush Plain and moves about unhindered from one village to another.

Nobody with whom I have discussed the subject seems to believe in the possibility of the Kurds uniting in a serious movement for autonomy, all that they really desire being a continuance of the existing anarchy which enables them to live as they have always lived; on the other hand, it is generally assumed that Russian influence is responsible for the covert agitation now perceptible among various tribes in the eastern districts, and it is evident that the Government is either unwilling or unable to interfere.

Several Kurdish Beys, including Kuli Khan, of the Zerekanli tribe; Sado Bey, of the Kaskanli tribe; Selim Pasha, of the Zilan tribe; and Agha Bey, of the Rudili tribe, have visited Erzeroum during the last three months and, although nothing definite has become known, it is supposed that differences of opinion have arisen between them and the military authorities with regard to the proposed organisation of tribal light cavalry, a scheme which still seems to hang fire. It is reported that they are dissatisfied with, and in fact refuse to accept, a system which, by including various tribes in one unit, would detract from their hereditary prestige and tend to assimilate the conditions of service to those of a regular army.

I have, &c.
P. J. C. McGREGOR.

[7054] No. 45.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 129.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 12, 1912.*

ASSIM BEY asked me to-day to express to you his very sincere regrets that the promises he had recently made to me to the effect that the reply of the Turkish Government to our counter-proposals regarding the Bagdad Railway and Persian Gulf questions would by now be in your hands [*sic*: ? had not been fulfilled]. But the combination of circumstances had made it impossible to fulfil his engagement. The Grand Vizier had not been able to preside over the Council of Ministers for many weeks, and although the remaining Ministers had devoted many councils to the discussion of this subject a final decision had not been reached. Unfortunately, until the present Government came into power the matter had been left aside, Hakki Pasha retaining the papers in his own hands, and Ministers had now been compelled to make a serious study of all the questions involved, and to examine very carefully whether any of the proposals made by His Majesty's Government did not clash with existing engagements of the Porte in connection, for instance, with the lighting and buoying.

It had, however, now been decided very shortly to send Reshid Bey, the "conseiller légiste" of the Porte, to assist Tewfik Pasha in the negotiations which will take place in London.

As his Excellency said that on several points a decision had been reached, I suggested that it would make a good impression if these negotiations could be begun at once, leaving matters of detail to be decided when the further examination of which he spoke had been made here. But his Excellency said that they were all so much bound up together that this would be impossible, but he finally begged to assure me, and to convey this assurance to you [*sic*], that the delay would be very short.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[7060] No. 46.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 135.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 12, 1912.*

ASSIM BEY told me to-day that the Government had decided to send a special mission, and it was practically settled that it would be under Hairi Bey, Minister of the Evkaf, or Religious Foundations, to visit the central provinces of Asia Minor, and he specially mentioned that he would go to the districts of Erzeroum, Kharput, and Diarbekir. He would be accompanied by Gabriel Effendi, of the Department of Justice, and Mustafa Fehzi, of the Municipality. The mission would possibly not be able to start till the end of April owing to the condition of the roads. The principal duties of the commission would be to examine into all the questions of dispute between the Kurds and Armenians regarding proprietorship of lands. The mission would be provided with a sum of money which I understand amounts to 100,000*l.*, each case would be examined on its merits, and the value decided upon would be immediately offered, but in case of non-acceptance, the cases would be referred to the tribunals. Apart from this sum of money, there are also large Government lands at the disposal of the commission, who have authority to make them over to claimants. He had strong hopes that in most cases there would be no necessity for a reference to the tribunals.

In this connection, his Excellency mentioned that the Cabinet had decided to give much more extended powers to the Valis of Erzeroum, Van, and Bitlis, which he trusted would tend towards better administration. Several changes had recently been made amongst the valis, and he hoped that some of the more incapable ones had been finally disposed of.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[7064] No. 47.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 139.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 14, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I yesterday received a telegram from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah, stating that a brother of the late Saadun Pasha had asked him for a secret interview, the object of which would be to place the Yezirat-el-Arab and the surrounding country, which belongs to the Saadun and Muntefik tribes, under the protection of His Majesty's Government.

Mr. Crow has replied to these overtures, saying that he could not encourage the proposed interview, but would report the matter to me.

I have approved Mr. Crow's action.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[7075] No. 48.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 30. Commercial.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 14, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith copies of the "convention additionnelle" between the Ottoman Government and Anatolian Railway Company for the construction and working of the Adar Bazar–Bolou line, together with a memorandum on the same subject by Mr. Weakley, commercial attaché to this embassy.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 48.

Additional Convention between the Ottoman Government and the Anatolian Railway Company.

ENTRE leurs Excellences Kirkor Sinapian Effendi, Ministre des Travaux publics, et Naïl Bey, Ministre des Finances, agissant au nom du Gouvernement Impérial ottoman, d'une part, et M. Édouard Huguenin, directeur général de la Société du Chemin de Fer ottoman d'Anatolie, agissant au nom et pour le compte de ladite société, d'autre part, il a été convenu ce qui suit :—

ARTICLE 1er.

Le Gouvernement Impérial ottoman, conformément à l'article 36 de la convention du 3 (15) février, 1308 (1893), et l'article additionnel de l'avenant en date du 28 septembre, 1314 (10 octobre, 1898), à la convention précitée, accorde, sous réserve de l'approbation de la présente convention additionnelle par une loi, à la Société du Chemin de Fer ottoman d'Anatolie, qui accepte, la concession aux conditions ci-après, de la construction et de l'exploitation de la partie du Chemin de Fer d'Ada-Bazar à Héraclée comprise entre Ada-Bazar–Bolou et un point situé à environ 60 kilom. au delà de Bolou à déterminer par le Ministère des Travaux publics sur le vu des études à présenter par la société.

ARTICLE 2.

La concession de ce chemin de fer sera, en tant qu'il n'y est pas dérogé par la présente, soumise aux clauses et conditions des convention et cahier des charges relatifs à la concession du Chemin de Fer de Haïdar Pacha–Angora.

ARTICLE 3.

La concession du chemin de fer faisant l'objet de la présente convention additionnelle, y compris l'embranchement d'Arifié–Ada-Bazar, prendre fin en même temps que celle du chemin de fer de Haïdar Pacha–Angora.

ARTICLE 4.

Les profils en travers type des terrassements, les types des ouvrages d'art courants, des stations, des bâtiments, seront conformes à ceux déjà approuvés pour la ligne d'Eski Chéhir–Konia. Toutefois, les ponts métalliques seront calculés d'après les bases qui ont été arrêtées par le Ministère des Travaux publics pour le Chemin de Fer de Bagdad.

ARTICLE 5.

Le minimum du rayon de courbure est fixé à 200 mètres.
Les déclivités ne devront pas dépasser 25 pour cent.

ARTICLE 6.

La société devra dresser et présenter au Ministère des Travaux publics le projet de tracé dans un délai maximum d'un an, compté à partir de la date de la promulgation de la loi approuvant la présente convention additionnelle.

ARTICLE 7.

Les travaux devront être achevés au plus tard deux ans et demi après l'approbation des projets y relatifs.

ARTICLE 8.

La société exécutera à ses frais, risques et périls les travaux de la seconde voie entre Haïdar Pacha et Pendik, tels qu'ils sont prévus aux projets présentés par la société, projets dont l'approbation de la présente convention additionnelle entraîne l'approbation.

Dans ces conditions, la convention additionnelle du 13 (26) octobre, 1323 (1907), relative à la seconde voie entre Haïdar-Pacha et Pendik est annulée.

La société pourra, d'ailleurs, apporter, avec l'autorisation du Ministère des Travaux publics, à ses projets, les modifications reconnues nécessaires lors de l'exécution des travaux. Les travaux de la seconde voie devront être terminés au plus tard dans les délais fixés pour l'achèvement de la ligne faisant l'objet de la présente convention additionnelle.

Le Gouvernement fera les expropriations nécessaires à l'exécution de cette seconde voie, étant entendu que—

1. La société paiera à l'État une somme forfaitaire de 800,000 fr.;
2. Elle remettra gratuitement la partie des terrains, nécessaires à la double voie, dont elle aurait déjà fait l'acquisition.

ARTICLE 9.

La ligne tout entière d'Arifié à Bolou et au point au delà de Bolou à déterminer comme il est dit à l'article 1er, bénéficiera—à partir de la date de la promulgation de la loi approuvant la présente convention additionnelle et jusqu'à l'expiration de la concession—par kilomètre construit et exploité, de la garantie de 15,000 fr. de recettes brutes annuelles kilométriques prévue à l'article 29 de la convention du 22 septembre, 1304, relative à la concession du Chemin de Fer de Haïdar-Pacha–Angora.

La longueur bénéficiant de cette garantie sera la longueur de ligne mesurée d'axe en axe des bâtiments des voyageurs des stations extrêmes.

ARTICLE 10.

Pour assurer le paiement régulier des sommes que le Gouvernement s'est engagé à payer à la société en exécution de l'article 9, le Gouvernement Impérial ottoman assigne et affecte à la société d'une manière irrévocable et inaliénable de sa part, à partir du moment où la présente sera devenue définitive et jusqu'à l'expiration de la concession, la somme annuelle de £T. 140,000, sur les recettes de la douane de vilayet de Constantinople. Cette somme passera après la somme annuelle de £T. 550,000, affectation privilégiée à toute charge postérieure, et réservée au service de l'emprunt Impérial ottoman 4 pour cent 1911.

L'Administration générale des Douanes et Contributions indirectes devra verser semestriellement, soit le 2 janvier (N.S.) et le 2 juillet (N.S.) de chaque année, et ce à partir du 2 janvier (N.S.), 1329 (1914), à la succursale de la Deutsche Bank à Constantinople, la somme de £T. 70,000 sur les revenus de la Direction des Douanes et Contributions indirectes du susdit vilayet, après paiement des sommes destinées à couvrir les semestrialités afférentes au service de l'emprunt Impérial ottoman 4 pour cent 1911. La succursale de ladite banque passera chaque versement semestriel dans un compte spécial au crédit du Gouvernement Impérial ottoman, avec un intérêt de 1 pour cent au-dessous de l'escompte officiel de la Banque de l'Empire d'Allemagne.

Cet intérêt courra au profit du Gouvernement Impérial ottoman, à partir de la date de chaque versement fait à la succursale de la Deutsche Bank, jusqu'à quinze jours avant la date de la présentation par la société du compte de la recette brute moyenne kilométrique de la ligne, servant de base au calcul de la somme nécessaire pour parfaire le revenu kilométrique fixé à l'article 9, compte qui sera arrêté le 31 décembre (N.S.) de chaque année.

ARTICLE 11.

Les recettes brutes de la ligne d'Arifié à Bolou et au point au delà de Bolou à déterminer comme il est dit à l'article 1er, feront, au fur et à mesure de la mise en exploitation des différentes sections situées au delà d'Ada-Bazar, masse avec celles de la ligne de Haïdar-Pacha.

ARTICLE 12.

Les titres nouveaux de la société émettrait pour la réalisation du prolongement au delà d'Ada-Bazar seront soumis à la loi sur le timbre.

ARTICLE 13.

Si le Gouvernement rachète la ligne d'Arifié à Bolou et prolongement il devra racheter en même temps les autres lignes de la Société du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie, et, réciproquement, s'il rachète les autres lignes de la société, il devra racheter en même temps la ligne d'Arifié à Bolou et prolongement.

ARTICLE 14.

Le montant du cautionnement est fixé à £T. 10,000.

Fait en doubles exemplaires et signés et échangés à Constantinople, le 27 Mouharem, 1330 (4 Kianun Sani, 1327) (17 janvier, 1912).

Le Ministre des Finances,
NAIL.

Le Ministre des Travaux publics,
KIRKOR.

Le Directeur général de la Société du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie,
ÉDOUARD HUGUENIN.

Enclosure 2 in No. 48.

Memorandum by Mr. Weakley.

THE signature on the 17th ultimo of the "convention additionnelle" for the construction and working by the Anatolian Railway Company of the line from Ada-Bazar to Bolou, which is to be an extension of the small branch line which leaves the main system of the Haïdar-Pasha–Angora Railway at Arifié, a small station beyond Ismidt, has brought the lengthy negotiations, in which the Anatolian Railway Company and the Public Works Department were engaged in 1910 and part of 1911, to an end, and has added about 200 kilom. to the German system of railways in Asia Minor.

As will be observed from the French text of the agreement, copy of which is herewith enclosed, the concession of a line starting from Ada-Bazar had already been secured by the Anatolian Railway Company under article 36 of the convention of the 3rd (15th) February, 1308 (1893), relative to the Eskishehr–Konia line. This article states:—

"Le concessionnaire s'engage, dans un délai de six mois à partir de la date où le Gouvernement en aura exprimé le désir, de faire les études préliminaires de la ligne qui s'étendra d'Ada-Bazar jusqu'à Héraclée en passant près de Hendek et près d'Useub

on de Dusdjé. Une convention spéciale sera conclue entre le Gouvernement Impérial et le concessionnaire relativement à la construction et à l'exploitation de cette ligne."

The provision made in article 10 of the new convention for the payment of the kilometric guarantee granted to the line from Arifié to Bolou (about 130 kilom.) of 15,000 fr. is the principal feature of the agreement. As originally drafted, the stipulations of the convention with regard to kilometric guarantees were that the sums due on that account should be met out of the surplus of revenues collected by the Public Debt Administration. The company were not apparently satisfied, for, after further negotiation, the payment of kilometric guarantees out of customs revenue was accepted by the Turkish Government, and those collected by the Constantinople customs have been assigned, after provision has been made for the service of the 1911 4 per cent. loan, for meeting the guarantees of the new railway. Not content with a lien secured on so important a branch of revenue, the railway company have scored a further success, in that the Customs Administration will, according to the terms of the agreement, pay into the Deutsche Bank an annual sum of £T. 140,000, payable in two six-monthly instalments. This amount is to be placed to the credit of the Turkish Government, and will bear interest calculated at 1 per cent. less than the official discount rate of the Bank of the German Empire, and any sums which may be due to the Ada-Bazar–Bolou Railway on account of kilometric guarantees are to be deducted by the Deutsche Bank from the deposit standing to the credit of the Turkish Government.

The financial conditions secured under the convention are the best which the Anatolian Railway Company has so far obtained from the Government, and no doubt an attempt will be made to obtain further assignments on customs revenues when the convention for the proposed extension of the railway from Angora to Sivas comes up for discussion.

By the new convention the company have also secured the doubling of the line between the Haidar-Pasha terminus and Pendik, which has been rendered necessary by the great increase of suburban passenger traffic.

The draft convention, as finally agreed upon by the Anatolian Railway Company and the Public Works Department, was passed by the Chamber on the 3rd June of last year, and, although submitted to the Senate the same day, no action could be taken, as Parliament closed for the summer recess the following day. The matter came up for discussion shortly after the commencement of the autumn session, and after certain amendments of the text, recommended by the Senate, had been accepted by the Chamber, the convention was passed by the Senate on the 3rd (16th) December and received Imperial sanction on the 27th December, 1911 (9th January, 1912).

It is expected that some difficulty will be experienced in the construction of the new line, owing to the mountainous character of the country through which it will pass. The region is fairly fertile and possesses extensive forest lands, and it is reported that considerable deposits of coal are to be met with in and around the Bolou district.

February 10, 1912.

[5242] No. 48.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 65.) *Foreign Office, February* 20, 1912.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 101 of the 2nd instant, relative to the present situation of the so-called "Chester scheme" for the exploitation of the oil-fields in Mesopotamia, from which it appears that your United States colleague has exercised some kind of pressure on the Sublime Porte in order that a decision favourable to the scheme may be arrived at.

With reference to the last sentence of your despatch, I should be glad to learn the grounds on which your Excellency bases the view that no steps can usefully be taken at the present stage to promote Mr. D'Arcy's interests in this region, since there is reason to fear that continued inaction on the part of His Majesty's Embassy may produce in the mind of the Turkish Government an erroneous impression that His Majesty's Government are indifferent on the subject.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[8146] No. 49.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 29.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 24, 1912.

FOLLOWING from consul at Beirout, 8 A.M. this morning:—

"Three Italian war-ships arrived this morning."

[8150] No. 50.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 30.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 24, 1912.

MY immediately preceding telegram of 24th February.

Some embassies and Sublime Porte have received news that Italians have sunk gun-boat in harbour at Beirout. Some arms shops and depôts pillaged, and some casualties. Stringent orders sent to Beirout and other coast towns for all possible measures to be taken for maintaining order.

It is feared that attack on Smyrna may be contemplated.

[8146] No. 51.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

(No. 66.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Foreign Office, February* 24, 1912.

SIR G. LOWTHER'S telegram No. 29 of 24th February: Beirout.

Have you any information?

[8151] No. 52.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 25.)

(No. 31.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 25, 1912.

FOLLOWING from consul at Beirout to-day:—

"My telegram of this morning.

"Admiral wrote to Governor-General and sent copy of letter to consul, giving one hour in which to deliver up the gun-boat and torpedo-boat in the port. Governor-General asked for twenty-four hours' delay, which was refused, and bombardment of the two vessels commenced at 9 o'clock. By 11 gun-boat was sunk, after being set fire to and abandoned by the crew.

"At 2 firing reopened on torpedo-boat, which was sunk, and war-ships left. Ten Turkish seamen and thirty to forty persons on shore killed. Ottoman Bank, Salonica Bank, custom-house, and an hotel near the port damaged by shells, two or three of which went over town.

"Excitement amongst Moslems is great and the Christians [? are alarmed], many removing to Lebanon.

"Mob attempted to rush prison. Civil and military authorities acted promptly to prevent disorder, and so far successfully. Some shops have been looted. Foreigners reported attacked, but only one case authenticated.

"Presence of British or other war-ship desirable to restore confidence and to prevent reprisals by Moslems on Christians, especially if the Italian ships return."

[8152] No. 53

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 25.)

(No. 32.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 25, 1912.*

FOLLOWING from consul at Beirout, No. 7:—

"My telegram No. 6.

"Martial law proclaimed at Beirout and the garrison being reinforced by troops from Damascus. No disorder yet, but the Christians very nervous owing to hostile attitude of Moslems, who yesterday broke into the military depôt and took possession of rifles and ammunition, which they refused to surrender.

"Italian ships in the offing all the night."

[8159] No. 54.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 25.)

(No. 24.)
(Telegraphic.) *Rome, February 25, 1912.*

YOUR telegram No. 66 of 24th February.

It is announced this morning that "Volturno" and "Garibaldi" entered Beirout harbour and demanded surrender of Turkish gun-boat and destroyer utilised for contraband traffic. On refusal to surrender they were destroyed. City was not molested.

I also learn that three ships of first squadron left Taranto on 21st February for Tobruk, and that officers stated that they would proceed thence on a cruise to show the flag elsewhere.

[8160] No. 55.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 25.)

(No. 25.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Rome, February 25, 1912.*

MY immediately preceding telegram of 25th February.

Admiral's report published this evening confirms the announcement of this morning and states that no fire was directed against city of Beirout or military edifices. Turkish gun-boat replied to fire, but was silenced in twenty minutes. Torpedo-boat destroyer was sunk by torpedo.

[8186] No. 56.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 151.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 19, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I recently heard it stated that, on the 17th January, 1,500 Turkish troops made a military march into the Lebanon. I telegraphed to His Majesty's consul-general at Beirout, for information as to the rumour, and I beg to enclose herewith copy of his despatch which I have received in reply.

The action of the general in command of the troops as reported by Mr. Cumberbatch is an irregularity and breach of the règlement, which under ordinary circumstances should not be overlooked. In view, however, of the state of war and the impossibility of moving troops except by sea and the necessity owing to the possibility of attacks by Italy of maintaining more than the usual number of troops at Beirout, it seems to be undesirable that a protest should be made to the Sublime Porte at the present moment. But as the appointment of a new governor this summer may afford an opportunity of suggesting some modification of the existing state of affairs, the attention of the Sublime Porte might at the same time be called to the incident in question. My Russian colleague whom I have consulted concurs in this view, and the French chargé d'affaires tells me that he will report in this sense to his Government.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

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Enclosure in No. 56.

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 8. Confidential.)
Sir, *Beirout, February 9, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram No. 2 of yesterday in reply to that of your Excellency No. 1 of the 6th on the subject of the military march to Baabda.

About a month ago, Yussuf Pasha consented to the request of the general in command of the troops of this garrison that the Lebanon roads in the immediate vicinity of Beirout should be used for exercising these troops, owing to the roads near the town being in a very bad condition and too limited for the necessary exercise of soldiers.

Consequent upon this general permission small bodies of soldiers were taken outside the town for marching drill, and were able to go a little way along the Lebanon roads without notifying their intention each time to the Lebanon Government.

On the 27th January the general decided upon having a longer march than usual of all arms, and he gave notice to the Governor-General that they would go as far as Baabda, the winter seat of the Lebanese Government, about two hours by road from Beirout.

The Governor-General and the staff of the Lebanese militia were present when the troops arrived and offered refreshments to the Turkish officers, who marched the force back after half-an-hour's rest.

Nothing would probably have been said on the subject had it not been for certain personal enemies of Yussuf Pasha, who seized this occasion to excite comments on what they chose to call an infringement of the spirit of the règlement.

No Lebanese has spoken to me on the subject, but both my French and Russian colleagues asked me whether I thought Yussuf Pasha was right in acquiescing, and I told them that I could not see what objection could be raised to the troops marching a slight way into the Lebanon, but that a march in force to the centre of Government was perhaps going too far, and that in any case, owing to the criticisms evoked, his Excellency would be well advised in intimating to the general that such a thing should not be repeated.

In a conversation I had last week with Yussuf Pasha on the subject he gave me to understand confidentially that he had communicated with the general, and that the movements of the troops will in future be confined to the immediate neighbourhood of this town.

I may add that, in order to move troops between Beirout and Sidon or Tripoli, they have to make use of Lebanon roads part of the way, and if it were necessary to send troops by road from Damascus to Beirout they would presumably be marched along what is called the old Damascus "chaussée," which traverses the Lebanon but is not a Lebanese road, having been conceded many years ago to a French stage-coach company (which conceded its rights to the railway company) and then to the Hedjaz railway.

Half the journey to Baabda has to be made along that "chaussée."

Yussuf Pasha maintains that the above facts provide arguments in favour of his non-refusal of permission for Imperial troops to use Lebanese roads for the purpose of drill marches.

I have, &c.
E. A. CUMBERBATCH.

[8196] No. 57.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 161.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 21, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on 30th December last the acting British consul-general at Bagdad informed me by telegram that the new consular guard had arrived on the previous day, bringing with them twenty-one boxes of ammunition and two rifles, which the Customs authorities refused to allow to be landed. Supposing that the difficulty arose merely out of the general prohibition now in force against the importation of ammunition into the Turkish Empire, and that the Central Government would at once recognise the propriety of making an exception in this

instance, I immediately made representations of an ordinary kind to the Central Customs Administration and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The former department was unable to do more than telegraph instructions that the cartridges should be landed and kept in the custody of the Customs authorities pending a settlement of the question, as the steamer was compelled to return to Bussorah within a few days of its arrival. The Minister for Foreign Affairs telegraphed in the same sense on 1st January, but as it happened both telegrams were delayed in transmission, and eventually the cartridges, &c., made no less than two journeys each way between Bagdad and Bussorah before the Porte consented to allow the goods to be handed over to the consulate-general.

The great delay in obtaining the necessary instructions was due to the fact that the Vali of Bagdad reported that the number of the guard had been increased; that the new arrivals had marched through the town under the command of officers, and carrying arms contrary to the usual practice, whereby, according to the vali, the outgoing guard left their rifles at the consulate-general, and the new men took them over on their arrival there; and, finally, that the twenty-one cases contained 23,000 cartridges, a number which the vali and the Porte considered vastly out of proportion to any possible need. The Porte from the first stated that they had no wish to interfere with the continued existence of a guard, however abnormal and unnecessary it might be at the present time; but they viewed with unconcealed apprehension what, according to the vali's reports, seemed like an attempt to increase the existing military guard, to double the number of rifles in the consulate-general, and to accumulate a very large quantity of ammunition there. Dr. Scott confirmed the vali's report as to the quantity of ammunition. For the rest, he reported that the guard had not been increased for the last five years beyond the normal number of thirty-six, except by the addition of a bugler two years ago, and that the only extra men on the present occasion were three non-combatant cooks required for caste purposes, as the outgoing Moslems had been replaced by Hindus. He added that there had been nothing unusual in the manner of the men's arrival, as it was their general practice to march to the consulate-general under arms, except on certain occasions when they had been landed from boats without traversing the town. In view of these explanations the Porte eventually directed the local authorities to allow the delivery of the cartridges, though they did so subject to all reserves, and continued to deprecate the introduction of so large a number at once. The ammunition was in due course handed over to the consulate-general.

This apparently simple question might have been infinitely more difficult of solution at a time when the Porte was less anxious to show itself conciliatory to His Britannic Majesty's Government. As it was, it was only by the most urgent representations to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, by insisting (with perhaps doubtful justice) on a general right of all consuls to import arms and ammunition without restriction, and by intimating that persistence in a mistrustful and obstructive attitude would probably be considered by His Majesty's Government as definitely unfriendly, that I prevailed upon the Central Government to waive their objections. It was therefore with no little dissatisfaction that I learnt from Dr. Scott on 25th January, at a time when it had become essential to carry our point at all costs, that the ammunition was really surplus and had been sent by the Indian military authorities in mistake; for it meant that representations of a strenuousness which it is wise to resort to but rarely under the present circumstances of this country had had to be wasted on a matter of purely factitious importance.

I venture to think it highly desirable that the attention of the Indian Government should be directed to this incident. No one can consider the present moment an opportune one for the suppression of the consular guard at Bagdad, but it must be recognised that the circumstances of both Bagdad and Constantinople are now widely different from what they were when the guard was instituted. The local and central authorities are not unnaturally jealous of its existence, and it is very undesirable that anything should be done still further to wound their susceptibilities. It would be well in future, I think, to lay down some definite and moderate rule as to the amount of ammunition to be imported for the use of the guard, and to advise the embassy in good time when such ammunition is about to be dispatched from India. I may add that one point besides those already adverted to in the course of this despatch seems to have attracted some little attention, namely, the substitution of Hindus for Moslems. I am ignorant as to the older practice and the present reasons for such a change, but it appears to me *primâ facie* that the employment

of Moslems for such a purpose in a Moslem country would perhaps lessen the likelihood of undesirable incidents.

I am, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[8151] No. 58.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 76.)
(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February 26, 1912.*

YOUR telegram No. 31 of 25th February.

We understand a French war-ship is proceeding to Beirout. Please ascertain from consul-general whether he considers presence of a British war-vessel is also desirable.

[6490] No. 59.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 26, 1912.*

WITH reference to the letter from this Office of the 9th ultimo relative to an enquiry made by the Italian Ambassador at this Court as to the position of the frontier between British and Ottoman territory to the west of Aden and to the east of a point described as "Cape Varner," I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit copy of a further communication from his Excellency, giving the latitude and longitude of the place in question, which is known as "Warner Point,"* and referring to the accompanying map on which it is marked.

The Marquess of Crewe is aware that for some time past there has been reason to believe that the Italian Government are considering the advisability of extending the area of naval action in their war with Turkey, and that such extension might involve operations against the Arabian possessions of the Ottoman Empire, and notably against the fortresses of Turba (or Turbat) and Sheikh Said.

In view of this fact, it appears probable that the object of the Marquess Imperiali's enquiry was to discover whether such operations would be likely to encounter opposition on the part of His Majesty's Government.

It appears to Sir E. Grey that, while His Majesty's Government have no ground for objecting to the occupation by the Italian forces, with a view to obtain a military advantage against Turkey, of any place on Ottoman soil from which the Turkish forces are unable to eject them, it would be impossible, in view of the position of Perim, to acquiesce in the permanent retention by Italy of any part of the territory in which the two fortresses in question are situated, which, by the agreement arrived at between Great Britain and Turkey and signed on the 20th April, 1905, the latter undertook never to alienate to a third Power.

I am accordingly to suggest that the Marquess Imperiali should be informed that the frontier between British and Ottoman territory in these regions touches the sea at Huon Murad to the east of Warner Point, and that, at the time when that frontier was delimited, the Turkish Government bound themselves not to alienate to any third Power the territory adjacent thereto, consisting of about 550 square miles roughly, in the form of a triangle, the apex of which lies at Barh-am-Ashara, the sides extending from that point along the frontier to Huon Murad and to Kuddam respectively, and the base being formed by the coast-line between those two places.

The Italian Government will doubtless understand from this reply that any part of the territory in question which they may occupy during the war must be abandoned on the conclusion of peace.

I am to request that the map transmitted herewith may be returned with your reply

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

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* No. 41.

[8577] No. 60.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 33.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 26, 1912.*

GOVERNMENT has issued orders for expulsion of all Italians from provinces of Beirout, Damascus, Aleppo, and Jerusalem, with the exception of Italian priests attached to religious institutions enjoying other than Italian protection. Minister for Foreign Affairs says that he thinks that the number will not exceed a few hundreds, but, in view of what had occurred at Beirout, [?] there would be risk of disturbances by leaving Italians in those provinces.

[8617] No. 61.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 34.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 27, 1912.*

YOUR telegram No. 76 of 26th February.

Telegraphic communication with Beirout now broken down.

[8644] No. 62.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 35.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 28, 1912.*

FOLLOWING is reply to my enquiry of consul-general at Beirout as to whether there were any indications that Italian fire was directed on town or only intended for the destruction of Turkish gun-boat:—

"Your telegram No. 2.

"Buildings hit by Italian shells are on the quay near the harbour, and damage done to them is entirely connected with sinking of Turkish boats.

"Immediately preceding the firing into port five heavy shells were fired over the town and fell near the municipal hospital, situated in the line of fire 2,000 metres from the harbour, which indicates intention to intimidate the population unless powder magazine in that neighbourhood was the objective.

"French war-ship arrived.

"Town quiet."

[8830] No. 63.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 36.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 28, 1912.*

FOLLOWING from consul at Damascus, No. 6:—

"Since the Beirout events of the 24th February alarm and uneasiness among the Christians are general and serious, although the local authorities have already taken special measures to keep order both in this city and the districts."

[8831] No. 64.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 37.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February 28, 1912.*

YOUR telegram No. 76 of 26th February.

Consul-general at Beirout states that British is vessel now unnecessary in view of presence of French ship of war, but asks whether he may be authorised to telegraph to commander-in-chief direct for one should any further troubles occur.

[8831] No. 65.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 90.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Foreign Office, February 28, 1912.*

YOUR telegram No. 37 of 28th February: Beirout.

Consul-general at Beirout must not telegraph direct to commander-in-chief. He should communicate with Foreign Office through you.

[8617] No. 66.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 91.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Foreign Office, February 28, 1912.*

BEIROUT.

Has your French colleague any information from Beirout that would point to desirability of dispatch of British war-vessel?

[8617] No. 67.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 79.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Foreign Office, February 28, 1912.*

BEIROUT.

Is French war-vessel in wireless communication with any French port, and can French Government give us any information as to situation at Beirout?

[8930] No. 68.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 29.)

India Office, February 28, 1912.

Sir,

IN reply to your letter, dated the 16th November last, regarding the proposed survey in the Persian Gulf, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council to enclose copy of telegraphic correspondence* with the Government of India, from which it will be seen that the cost of carrying out this work by employing the R.I.M.S. "Palinurus" is estimated at 70,011 rupees (4,667*l.* 8*s.*) a-year for a period of eight years.

The Secretary of State in Council is prepared to defray from Indian revenue a moiety of the expenditure on the understanding that the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury will accept the other moiety as a charge against the British Exchequer, to be adjusted as part of the annual settlement in respect of diplomatic and consular expenditure.

I am to take this opportunity of enclosing correspondence† received from India on the 9th December last, regarding the programme of work to be undertaken during 1911–12.

Copy of this letter, with enclosures, is being communicated to the Admiralty.

I am, &c.
R. RITCHIE.

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* To Viceroy, dated November 18, 1911 (already communicated November 21, 1911); Viceroy, dated February 3, 1912.

† Letters from Naval Commander-in-Chief to Government of India, dated June 18 and September 13; telegram from Naval Commander-in-Chief to Government of India, No. 92, dated September 18; letter from Government of India to Naval Commander-in-Chief, dated September 28; letter from Director, Royal Indian Marine, dated October 17 (with enclosure); letter from Government of India to Director, Royal Indian Marine, dated November 8, 1911.

[8928] No. 69.

Western Assurance Company to Foreign Office.—(Received February 29.)

Sir, 14, *Cornhill, London, February* 28, 1912.

RE Adana riots.

Referring to our previous correspondence on the above subject, and more particularly to our letter of the 14th December last and your esteemed reply of the 2nd January this year, we now have the honour to send you the following as a statement of the claim which we suggest should be at once brought officially before the Turkish Government with a view to recover the sum paid by our company as the result of a compromise arrived at to settle three insurance claims under the policies in regard to which a final sentence was pronounced by the Competent Ottoman Court.

The claims in question were brought by a certain Arestakes Gasparian, an Armenian and Ottoman subject, who is an advocate and in a respectable position. He had effected two insurance policies on his own properties in Adana, and was acting at the same time for a certain Aprahamian, the holder of another policy. These policies were numbered 3069495, 3069496, and 3189504 respectively, the first being for the sum of 600*l.*, the second for 200*l.*, and the third for 300*l.*, making a total of 1,100*l.*

All the three properties were completely destroyed in the riots and disturbances at Adana on the 14th April, 1909. On the same day the three houses insured were burned, hundreds of other houses were also burned to the ground. No salvage was recovered or was recoverable. Thereupon the assured brought an action in the mixed court of the Tidjaret at Constantinople. The company pleaded that it was not liable because the case came under one of the articles of the "conditions" endorsed on its policy.

Almost the only argument before the court turned on the question whether the article in question exempted the company from payment. It was not denied that the property had been destroyed. Nor was it claimed that it had been over insured.

The article relied on was the following:—

"En cas de guerre, d'invasion, d'émeute, de complot, dans tous les cas où les bâtiments assurés sont occupés, en tout ou en partie, par des troupes nationales ou étrangères, armées ou non armées, belligérantes ou non belligérantes, la compagnie n'est responsable de l'incendie que si l'assuré prouve qu'il ne provient, ni directement, ni indirectement, des causes ci-dessus."

This may be translated as follows:—

"The company is only responsible for loss by fire if the assured proves that the fire did not happen either directly or indirectly from any of the following causes, namely, in case of war, invasion, riot, conspiracy, in cases where the buildings insured are occupied either wholly or in part by national or foreign troops, whether armed or not, belligerents or non-belligerents."

The fire occurred beyond a doubt during a terrible riot in which hundreds of Armenians were murdered. The company claimed that the "émeute" signified riot. Various dictionaries were quoted to show that "émeute" was equivalent to "riot" and "general disorder." The plaintiff asserted that the fire did not happen during an "émeute," and that there was no "émeute" during the Adana troubles. The court, presided over by an Armenian, decided that the word signified "a seditious movement of the people against the constituted authority," and that there was no seditious movement at the time. Thereupon it gave a formal judgment to that effect and condemned the company to pay the full amount of the policies with interest and costs.

This judgment by Turkish law, when it had been signed, as it was by the British dragoman, was absolutely final and gave no right to appeal.

Considering the question outside technicalities any Government must admit that the clause in question indicated riot and public disorder, irrespective of the question whether such disorder and movement of the people was against constituted authority or seditious.

The company, in reference to the general liability of the Government for the losses incurred during the Adana disturbances, begs to call attention to the memorials submitted by them to the Foreign Office on the 5th October and the 11th December, 1911.

In these memorials the company set out the facts and circumstances connected with the fires, troubles, and massacres in Adana, and concluded by suggesting that

our company "should either not be permitted to present themselves before the Turkish court in Constantinople in answer to similar claims, or that if in the judgment of His Majesty's Government it were expedient that they so present themselves, that instructions should be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador in Constantinople to the effect that the dragoman should refuse to sign any judgment of the court in similar cases, such judgment being a flagrant denial of justice."

It did not appear to His Majesty's Government that it was expedient to adopt this course.

They may also be allowed to refer to a memorial addressed to C. M. Marling, Esq., His Britannic Majesty's chargé d'affaires, on the 15th November, 1909, by Sir Edwin Pears, which deals with the general question of holding the Turkish Government responsible for the losses which were incurred by this company and by another British firm.

It is true that the only payment which our company has been called upon to make up to the present time is that in reference to the three policies before referred to, viz.:—

	£
Policy No. 3069495	600
" " 3069496	200
" " 3189504	300
	1,100
To this must be added the plaintiff's legal and other costs	300
Total	1,400

This was compromised by our payment of 700*l.* in full satisfaction of all claims under these policies.

If a settlement had not been made a seizure would have been effected upon all the property of the company situate in Turkey, and our business would have suffered a very grave loss.

In addition to this sum we ourselves have not been able to recover, from our agent in Adana, premiums due to us, and have been put to very heavy expense in connection with this affair during the last three years. We therefore claim the following amount from the Turkish Government, viz.:—

	£ s. d.	£
Loss paid under the policies		700
Counsel's fee (M. Barozzi)	£281 10 0	
Solicitor's fee (Sir Edwin Pears)	105 0 0	
Branch manager's travelling expenses	28 7 3	
Telegrams	13 10 3	
Bank charges	4 2 6	
		433
Balance of premiums due from Adana agent and not received		77
		£1,210

We therefore respectfully urge His Majesty's Government to give the necessary instructions that the payment of this amount should be demanded from the proper department of the Sublime Porte, even though the general question of the liability of the Turkish Government for all losses to British subjects during the Adana disturbances should not be pressed.

As requested in the letter of the 2nd January, the company hereby encloses translation of the two "statements of claim."

I have, &c.
R. H. R. BURDER, *Manager.*

Enclosure 1 in No. 69.

Translation of Original Petition in Turkish corresponding to Statement of Claim.

SECOND STATEMENT OF CLAIM.

To the President of the First Chamber of the Tribunal of Commerce of Constantinople.

Register 325/598, 19*th October*, 1909 (1325 o.s.).

AS appears by a policy of insurance No. 3189504, bearing the signature of Mr. P. Leete, British subject, residing at Galata, Voivoda Han, the authorised director

of the agency in the Ottoman Empire of the British company of assurance against fire, the Western, having its central office in London, my client, Der Apraham Effendi, son of Panos, inhabitant of Adana, for the present without profession, insured with the said company his house, situate at Adana in the Chirak quarter, for the sum of 300*l.* This house having been burnt, the said company refuses to pay me the aforesaid sum.

In consequence I ask that Mr. Leete shall be cited to appear before your court according to usage, and that judgment should be given ordering the payment by the said company, Western, of the 300*l.* with interest and expenses.

(Signed) ARESTAKES GASPARIAN, *Advocate*,
Voivoda Han, Galata.

Attorney for the above-mentioned Epraham Effendi acting by legalised power of attorney.

21*st September*, 1909 (1325 o.s.)

Enclosure 2 in No. 69.

Translation of Original Petition in Turkish corresponding to Statement of Claim.

To the President of the First Chamber of the Tribunal of Commerce of Constantinople.

Register 325/599 19*th October*, 1909 (1325 o.s.).

AS appears by two policies of insurance Nos. 3069495 and 3069496, and bearing the signature of Mr. P. Leete, British subject, residing in Galata, Voivoda Han, the director authorised for the agency in the Ottoman Empire of the Western Company of Assurance against fire, of British nationality, having its central office at London, I insured in the said company my two houses situated in the Tarsus quarter at Adana for the sums of 600*l.* and 200*l.*, that is to say, a total of 800*l.* These houses having been burnt the said company refuses to pay me the aforesaid sum.

In consequence I ask that Mr. Leete should be summoned to appear before your tribunal according to usage, and that a judgment should be given ordering the payment by the said Western Company of the 800*l.* aforesaid with interest and expenses.

(Signed) ARESTAKES GASPARIAN, *Advocate*,
Voivoda Han, Galata.

21*st September*, 1909 (1325 o.s.).

[8985] No. 70.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 29.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of correspondence regarding the lighting and buoyage of the Persian Gulf.

Copy has been sent to the Admiralty.

India Office, February 29, 1912.

Enclosure 1 in No. 70.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February* 25, 1912.

PERSIAN Gulf lighting.

Please refer to my telegram dated the 5th instant.

According to report by Sir P. Cox, flagstaff has been hoisted by Russian consul-general, and two powerful lanterns, simplex automatic make, burning incandescent light, are lighted by him at night. Four lights are now shown all night by Russian and Turkish consulates, and enquiries are being made by Lloyd's and shipping

companies. It is pointed out by naval commander-in-chief that our position is in this way being weakened, and that, in the event of preferential rights on the strength of our services to navigation in the Gulf being claimed by us, we shall be told in reply that other Powers have had to act for the safety of their own ships, owing to our not having done what has been acknowledged by us to be necessary. Immediate action, and installation of lighted buoys at Bahrein and of inner lighted buoy at Bushire in particular, is strongly urged by admiral. Orders of His Majesty's Government at as early a date as possible are solicited.

Enclosure 2 in No. 70.

The Marquess of Crewe to the Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, February* 27, 1912.

LIGHTING of Persian Gulf.

See your telegram dated the 25th February.

Moiety of charges in respect of the two lighted buoys at Bahrein, and of the lighted buoy at the inner anchorage, Bushire, has been accepted by Treasury. Trinity House is being asked to procure these buoys so that they may be sent out with as little delay as possible. Steps are being taken to expedite other matters connected with scheme.

Enclosure 3 in No. 70.

India Office to Trinity House.

India Office, February 27, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to state, for the information of the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House, that it has been decided to instal with the least possible delay the lighted buoy at the inner anchorage, Bushire, and the two lighted buoys at Bahrein, which were recommended by the Committee of Enquiry on the Lighting and Buoyage of the Persian Gulf, dated the 29th April, 1909.

The Marquess of Crewe would be much obliged if the Elder Brethren could arrange to procure these buoys at their earliest convenience, to be shipped through the store department of this Office, who would be glad to learn as soon as possible when they are ready for shipment, in order to obtain freight. It would be necessary to state the number of packages, &c., and this might be done in direct communication with the store department.

It will be remembered that the cost of the buoys was estimated at 600*l.* each, in the supplementary report of Mr. D. W. Hood, dated the 28th June, 1909, and the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury have consented to defray from British revenues a moiety of this sum.

A further communication will be addressed to you regarding certain other portions of the scheme recommended by the committee.

I am, &c.
R. RITCHIE.

[9224] No. 71.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 2.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated 1st March, 1912, regarding the Turco-Italian war.

India Office, March 2, 1912.

Enclosure in No. 71.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

(Telegraphic.) P. *March* 1, 1912.

REPRESENTATIONS begging for intervention of His Majesty's Government in connection with blockade and bombardment of Hodeidah, and loudly protesting against alleged intention to extend blockade to Yenbo and Jeddah, are beginning to reach us from Mahommedan bodies in India. They are being told in reply that we have no reason for believing that blockade of Yenbo and Jeddah is contemplated by Italians. If, however, information is received indicating existence of intention to extend blockade, I trust that strong remonstrance will be addressed to Italian Government, in view of strong feeling on part of Mahommedans against ports leading to Mecca and Medina being interfered with.

In our own interests it is very desirable that we should be able to show Indian and Afghan Mahommedans that steps to allay their anxiety in this matter are being taken by us. Deep resentment would be caused in India by any interference with the pilgrim traffic.

[9502] No. 72.

Foreign Office to Imperial Ottoman Bank.

(Confidential.)

Foreign Office, March 2, 1912.

Sir,

WITH reference to the visit paid to this Office by two of your directors on the 29th ultimo, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to inform you, with reference to the several questions asked, that his views are as follows:-

1. As regards the sale of the shares of the Ottoman Bank in the Bagdad Railway Company as far as Bagdad, the point is one on which His Majesty's Government could not presume to give the bank advice.

2. His Majesty's Government would willingly see an Englishman appointed on the board of the Bagdad Railway, but the appointment of one Englishman alone under present conditions is not of sufficient importance for His Majesty's Government to press for it or ask that any sacrifice should be made to obtain it.

3. His Majesty's Government have not yet received the reply of the Ottoman Government respecting the sections of the railway between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf. On receipt of that reply they will give the matter of how British interests can be most adequately represented their most careful consideration; but they can give no pledge whatever to the Ottoman Bank as to the financial arrangements which may be made.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[9275] No. 73.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 3.)

(No. 43.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 3, 1912.

MY telegram No. 33 of 26th February
Following from consul at Beirout yesterday:—

"Decree of expulsion of Italians extended to the Lebanon."

[9317] No. 74.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 171.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February* 27, 1912.

IN the course of a conversation which I had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon on the subject of the Italian action at Beirout, on which I had the

honour to report to you in my telegrams Nos. 29 and 30 of the 24th instant, his Excellency explained to me that the Turkish gun-boat and torpedo-boat had been left in the harbour because they did not dare to move out, the Government having information that their movements would be watched by Italian cruisers. His Excellency added that he did not object so much to the attack made upon them as to the fact that the time allowed for their surrender was insufficient, and that the bombardment had been begun even before the expiration of that time limit. The second bombardment, which took place after both ships had already been hopelessly damaged, had caused real damage to the town. His Excellency could not believe that this damage was unintentional, for one shell had actually fallen 5 kilom. from the town; and it was evident that the object of the Italians was to create a disturbance in Beirout with possible loss of life to foreigners in order that pressure might be brought to bear on Turkey to make peace.

Assim Bey's complaint of the shortness of time allowed is confirmed by a telegram which I have just received from His Majesty's consul-general at Beirout, in which he states that, according to the account given to him by the governor-general, the letter of the Italian admiral demanding the surrender of the ships reached him only twenty minutes before the Italian ships opened fire, and before a reply could be returned to the effect that the Turkish ships would leave the port to surrender, a second shell hit the gun-boat and exploded by the magazine, setting fire to the ship. By good fortune the harbour was empty of steamers, though the quay was crowded with non-combatants; the number of victims on board the Turkish ships and ashore has not yet been ascertained, but it is known to be larger than was reported in Mr. Cumberbatch's telegram No. 6.

Assim Bey further informed me that he had had some difficulty in persuading his colleagues to abandon the general measure of expulsion and to adopt the more moderate measure of expelling all Italians from the four provinces of Beirout, Damascus, Aleppo, and Jerusalem, as reported in my telegram No. 33 of yesterday, with the exception of Italian priests attached to religious institutions enjoying other than Italian protection. Fifteen days' grace had been granted. To have left the Italians there gloating over their triumph in the destruction of defenceless craft would have constituted a danger to the maintenance of order in the affected districts; but the Italian action could, in Assim Bey's opinion, have no effect on the question of peace. If the Italians had irrevocably decided to annex the provinces of Tripoli and Cyrenaica let them do so, but General Ameya has practically admitted that they could not.

Assim Bey thought it unlikely that the Italians would attack Smyrna, though this was the general view which prevailed two days ago, and he expressed himself desirous of seeing the Italian fleet expose themselves to the fire of the Turkish guns and effect a landing somewhere. I understand that Italian ships were seen off Mersina yesterday, but they did not approach the town.

There has been no excitement here over the Beirout incident, the Turks preserving their usual calm, and while all agree that neither this bombardment nor even attacks on fortified towns can have any effect in bringing Turkey to terms, they consider it a matter to be deplored that innocent lives and valuable property should thus be wantonly destroyed.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[9319] No. 75.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 173.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February* 28, 1912.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 23 of the 20th January ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from the commercial attaché at Constantinople, explaining the actual state of affairs of the Turkish Customs at Bagdad, and the necessity for a speedy settlement of the question.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 75.

Report by Commercial Attaché, Constantinople, on Turkish Customs.

[Foreign Office despatch No. 23 (1591/12) of the 20th January, 1912, enclosing correspondence with the Board of Trade.]

New Specific Tariff.—The draft of the new specific tariff which has been drawn up by Sir R. Crawford is now being printed, and copies will be obtained as soon as they are available.

Bagdad Customs and Bonded Warehouses.—By a long-established custom sanctioned by the authorities, the breaking up of bales and cases of merchandise which arrive at Bagdad in transit for Persia takes place within the precincts of the Customs premises.

The operations of breaking such bales and cases and converting them into packages of dimensions and weights suitable for animal transport takes place under Customs supervision, and merchants are further allowed to store such merchandise in certain rooms—for which a rent is charged—inside the Customs buildings until transport is available and the goods can be cleared for transit. It has long been recognised that the accommodation at the Bagdad Customs for the warehousing of goods, whether for the local trade or for transit, is very limited, and demands have frequently been made by local merchants for an increase of covered space. The unsatisfactory state of the custom-houses at several ports—Bagdad included—was so far admitted by the Turkish Government that engagements were taken by the Porte in 1907, on the conclusion of the agreement, for the increase of the import duty from 8 per cent. to 11 per cent. for the rebuilding or enlarging of the custom-house premises at those ports. These engagements are being steadily carried out by the Customs Department; improvements in some of the ports have already been effected, whilst the work to be undertaken in others is being duly considered. A considerable amount of correspondence has been exchanged between the civil and customs authorities at Bagdad and the Central Administration in Constantinople on the subject of the new premises to be put up at Bagdad, and, although a good deal of trouble has been taken, the administration has been unable to come to a decision in the matter, owing to the fact that the area occupied by the present buildings cannot be extended, and that no suitable site within the limits of the city, and having direct access to the river, has so far been found.

In conversation recently with Sir R. Crawford on the subject I learnt that the customs authorities are much concerned about the present state of confusion which reigns at the Bagdad Customs, and which has been caused principally by the accumulation of goods destined for Persia. The disturbed state of the country over the Persian border has practically brought about a complete suspension of traffic between Bagdad and Kermanshah. Goods for transit to Persia are lying in the stores of the Bagdad Customs, and the continual arrival of merchandise by river for Persia has so encumbered the custom-house space that Bash Mudir (chief customs officer) has been obliged to devise some temporary means for dealing with the situation. Although, contrary to the regulations, this officer has, with the approval of the central office, authorised the temporary storage of goods arriving in transit in depôts situated outside the customs boundary and in various parts of the town. These depôts are hired by merchants, and are necessarily under Customs control, but this exceptional measure has thrown an extra amount of work on the customs officials, and they also incur responsibilities which the administration has every interest to see them relieved of.

Recent advices received from Bagdad show that the available storage room in the town is small, and all has been secured; much more is wanted, and, although the local agency of the Imperial Ottoman Bank is quite willing to erect temporary stores, no suitable site can be found within the town for putting up such buildings.

The administration has been brought by a series of circumstances to face the difficult problem of reorganisation and construction at Bagdad, and this is now rendered more difficult of solution by the fact that the Bagdad Railway Company are taking in hand the work of construction of the line from Bagdad northwards, and besides have in view the construction of the port.

The new Customs buildings should be constructed close to the port and also be within easy reach of the railway terminus, and it is quite obvious that the Customs

administration can take no steps until the railway company have fixed the site of the terminus and decided the position of the future port on the river. Even when these two points are settled, the question of the storage of goods has also to be solved, as the railway company not only have the right to construct the port of Bagdad, but by articles 23 and 24 of the convention of the 5th March, 1903, also have the right to build warehouses for the storage of goods.

In view of these considerations and of the urgent necessity for coming to a prompt decision in order to place the customs service at Bagdad on a proper footing, the administration, rather than undertake the carrying out of an expensive scheme of construction, which will very probably involve an expenditure of some £T. 130,000, would seem more inclined to arrive at some arrangement with the railway company. Negotiations have not, I understand, actually taken place; the administration has limited its action to making enquiries of the railway company as to the intentions of the company with regard to the port, railway terminus, and the stores, and the sites which those works are to occupy. Enquiries have also been made as to whether the railway company would be prepared to entertain proposals for the building of the new custom-house, and I understand the company are favourably disposed to discuss matters with the administration and to make suitable arrangements. Matters appear to have reached this stage, and it is feared that, should further congestion take place in the Bagdad Customs, the administration will have no alternative but to come to terms with the railway company.

In the concluding paragraph of their letter of the 10th ultimo the Board of Trade express the view that it appears premature to make any arrangements for the construction of the custom-house and bonded stores by the railway company until the company which will work the lines from Bagdad to Bussorah has been formed, and, further, that, as the lines north and south of Bagdad will be under different companies, it would be preferable that the construction of the customs buildings should be the joint undertaking of the two companies rather than that of the Bagdad Railway Company alone. The actual position of affairs at Bagdad is, however, such that it cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely; some line of action must be adopted, and the hands of the administration may be forced at any time to come to some arrangement with the Bagdad Company.

Although the Bagdad Railway Company have given up their concession for the construction and working of the Bagdad–Bussorah section, they still retain the exclusive right to build the port of Bagdad and to put up warehouses for the storage of goods, and it is conceivable that some arrangement for the erection and working of these and similar stores conjointly with the new company that is to construct the Bagdad–Bussorah section might be come to were this company already formed. The subject of participation in the building of the port and warehouses might possibly be considered in the forthcoming discussions relative to the Bussorah section.

February 24, 1912.

[9321] No. 76.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 175.)

Sir, *Constantinople, February* 27, 1912.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 171 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of an official communication published yesterday in the local press giving the Sublime Porte's version of the attack by Italian war-ships on two Turkish vessels in Beirout harbour, together with a copy of the governor-general of Beirout's report on the incident. The Turkish press express indignation but no surprise at the Italian action. Both the "Tanin" and the "Ikdam" join in recommending the Turkish Government to indulge in such reprisals as they can, by expelling all Italian subjects from the Empire; and the Turkish press in general seems to regard the Italian Chamber's approval of the annexation decree, the Beirout incident, and Italian endeavours to excite Said Idris to further rebellion, as merely so many fresh incentives to more determined resistance, and rejection of all pacific overtures on the part of the Turks.

From these recent events the "Tanin" draws the following conclusions:—

1. The attack at Beirout was to be expected, and there was no just ground for the popular agitation which for a short time manifested itself there.

2. Italy is intent on making a mortal thrust at Turkey; there is, therefore, no reason why Turkey should continue to harbour Italian subjects. Germany has counselled moderation, and Turkey has listened for five months to her counsels; let her go now and give them elsewhere.

3. The Italian Chamber's approval of the annexation decree has removed all possibility of a peaceful settlement of the Tripoli question, and the Powers, especially Germany, Italy's ally, who is charged with Italian interests here, will have no basis for mediation, nor does the fault lie with the Turks.

4. Turkey is indeed in need of assistance from the Powers; but if they will not render it, let them at least remain neutral and let her settle matters alone with Italy.

Finally the paper concludes from Italy's last desperate step that she is at her wits end, and does not know what means to take next to end the war; all her large forces in Tripoli have effected nothing, nor have they managed to advance more than a two hours' march from the town of Tripoli. By force of arms they find they can achieve nothing; and so they have devised this ignominious method of warfare, but they dare not attack Smyrna or Salonica, where forts await them, nor the Dardanelles, which are only too anxious to give them a warm reception.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[9325] No. 77.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 179.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 28, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit a despatch which I have received from the military attaché to this Embassy, regarding the late Italian action at Beirout, and the present position in the Hedjaz and Yemen.

In the latter connection and with reference to Sir R. Rodd's despatches Nos. 31 and 35 (enclosed in your despatch No. 62 of the 19th instant), I have the honour to report that Assim Bey quite recently told me that it was perfectly true that the Italians had been giving money to Said Idriss, but that the Turkish Government had no anxiety whatever on that score. He could be easily suppressed with the troops at their disposal in the Yemen, and these latter had supplies and ammunition enough to last for two years. The Imam Yahia was quiet, and the Government had no reason to believe that he was not satisfied with the arrangement recently concluded.

His Excellency added that the articles in the "Temps" describing these countries as in a condition of revolt were absurd and untrue.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 77.

Major Tyrrell to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 13.)
Sir, *Constantinople, February 26, 1912.*

WITH reference to the Italian action at Beirout, I have the honour to state that this and other similar action in the future do not seem to me calculated to produce the desired impression on the Turkish military authorities, whose attitude on the question is pretty accurately expressed in the annexed cutting from the "Jeune Turc."

About a week ago I was discussing with Mahmud Shevket Pasha the possibility of decisive action by the Italians with a view to the termination of hostilities. Beirout was mentioned. He said that a bombardment was impossible, it being an undefended port. No action there would have any influence on the war, and its only result would be the expulsion of Italians. He was full of confidence, and said that it was quite impossible for the Italians to pass the Dardanelles. "Nous avons des mines," he said, as if he were imparting a great piece of news and as if that clinched the matter, "and behind the mines and the forts is our fleet." I hear, however, that the *morale* of the Turkish fleet has been deteriorating during its long period of inaction at Nagara, and that fires are not kept up as they should be. In other directions, too, Turkish vigilance

seems to have been somewhat relaxed lately. All the European redif units have been disbanded, and reservists have been dismissed in considerable numbers, though their places have been filled to some extent by calling up others, and by incorporating recruits. Though some nizam battalions have been transferred to the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles to replace the disbanded redif battalions of the second class which were there, the result is that the force at the Dardanelles, as well as in other places, is less than it was two months ago, and a surprise attack is perhaps more likely to succeed than the Turks think. However, they consider that all that is necessary has been done, and there have been no movements or preparations to record since the beginning of the year.

It must not be overlooked that the redifs and other reservists have all been ordered to hold themselves in readiness, and can be collected and embodied again at very short notice.

The opinion in military circles is that, even if the Italian fleet were to effect the passage of the Dardanelles, with or without loss, and were to appear before Constantinople, this would not end the war.

As regards Italian action in the Yemen, which is alluded to in the cutting annexed to this despatch, it will probably be confined to moral and material assistance to Said Idriss, against whom operations are now being carried out. It is true that the position of the Turkish troops in those parts, cut off as they are from all reinforcement, is not an enviable one. But it is by no means certain that they cannot hold their own for a very long time, not merely against Said Idriss in Assyr, but also against a general Arab rising in the Yemen districts which were subdued last year—an event which is moreover considered to be most improbable.

The only way in which operations here might decisively affect the result of the war with Italy would be the complete defeat of the Turks in Assyr, followed by a successful invasion of the Hedjaz by Said Idriss.

Mahmud Shevket Pasha tells me that the Turkish troops in the Yemen and Assyr now amount to 46,000 men, but his figures are always unreliable, and I think he overstates their present strength.

Roughly, fifty battalions and half-a-dozen mountain batteries were sent there during 1911 in connection with the Yemen and Assyr expeditions, totalling about 35,000 men. Though it is quite impossible to say how many of these men remain now, it is fairly certain that losses, chiefly from disease, have been very heavy, and that not more than two-thirds of the force is now available. In addition to the troops of the expeditionary force, there is the permanent garrison of the Yemen, the XIVth Army Corps, 26 battalions. Mahmud Shevket Pasha says that the proper strength of this army corps is 25,000. I think 10,000 would now be a liberal estimate for it. The fact that there are now 11,000 recruits destined for the XIVth Army Corps who are now being trained in other places owing to the impossibility of sending them to the Yemen, shows that this army corps was very far below its paper strength.

I therefore estimate the number of Turkish troops now in the Yemen and Assyr at from 30,000 to 35,000.

Of this force, some twenty battalions are now on the road Konfuda–Mikhail Abhu, confronting Said Idriss, who is also liable to be attacked by troops co-operating from the side of Hodeida. As however the attitude of some of the Zeranek tribes in the Tohama is also doubtful, the Turks will probably require all the remainder of their army in the Yemen district, and the force now in Assyr must alone be considered in relation to Said Idriss. Even if it were defeated, Said Idriss could not reach Mekka unless the Hedjaz Arabs also revolted against the Turks and joined him, which, they say here, is impossible.

The 43rd Division, in the Hedjaz, is only 3,000 or 4,000 strong, and though the Hedjaz Railway could be used to send fresh troops, there still remain 250 miles of desert between railhead and Mekka.

I do not think we have enough information of the feeling of the tribes in the Hedjaz to be able to judge whether they are likely to join Said Idriss or not, so as to make an advance on Mekka possible in the event of his first defeating the Turks.

I have, &c.
G. E. TYRRELL, *Military Attaché.*

Enclosure 2 in No. 77.

Extract from the "Jeune Turc" of February 25, 1912.

CERTES, on cherche aussi à nous créer des difficultés au Yémen, à nous impressionner par une action navale dans les eaux de Syrie, à nous effrayer par le bombardement des places non fortifiées comme Beyrouth, et cela en contradiction absolue avec les résolutions de la conférence de La Haye, mais nous croyons traduire l'opinion publique de notre pays en disant que tout cela n'est pas en état de nous forcer à souscrire la loi d'annexion votée par la Chambre italienne, tant que la Tripolitaine n'est pas effectivement conquise par les armes italiennes.

Nous ferons tous les sacrifices que la situation nous impose soit au Yémen, soit dans n'importe quel autre point de l'Empire, mais nous ne nous rendrons pas ridicules au point de faire cadeau à l'Italie de nos provinces africaines pour assouvir sa convoitise et parce qu'il y va de sa "dignité nationale."

Si sa "dignité nationale" lui était vraimont chère, elle ne se serait pas d'abord lancée dans cette guerre de brigandage et elle renoncerait ensuite à tous les bluffs pour ne laisser la parole définitive qu'aux armes sur le champ de bataille en Tripolitaine.

[9550] No. 78.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 4.)

India Office, March 2, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to acknowledge receipt of your letter, dated the 20th February, 1912, requesting his observations on a letter from the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, dated the 13th February, regarding the scheme of lighting and buoyage in the Persian Gulf, set out in the letter from this Office, dated the 25th January last. In that letter the total expenditure on a complete scheme was estimated not to exceed:—

	£
Initial	102,400
Annual, recurring	7,700

but certain points were noted as awaiting final settlement, viz.:—

(1.) The provision of a light-vessel some 4 miles to seaward of the British lighted buoy on the outer bar of the Shatt-el-Arab;

(2.) The substitution of a lighted buoy for a light-vessel at the outer anchorage at Bushire;

(3.) The provision of a lighthouse tender; and

(4.) The provision of a lighthouse depôt.

Copy of recent telegraphic correspondence with the Government of India, and of letters addressed to the Trinity House, on the subject of the scheme, is enclosed.

2. As regards (1), it will be seen that the Government of India still share the view originally expressed in the letter of the naval commander-in-chief, dated the 25th February, 1911, and supported in the letter addressed by the Admiralty to the Foreign Office on the 20th May, 1911, that the light-ship in the Shatt-el-Arab is necessary, and that the substitution of a lighted buoy, as suggested by the Lords Commissioners, would be impracticable in that locality through the risk of its possible extinction. In this view the Marquess of Crewe concurs, and he trusts that, on the further explanations now given, the Lords Commissioners will agree to waive their objection to this item of the programme.

3. With regard to (2), the Government of India agree in the proposed substitution of the lighted buoy for the light-ship at Bushire, and it is proposed to arrange accordingly.

4. The questions of the lighthouse tender (3), and the depôt (4), are dealt with in the letter addressed to the Trinity House, dated the 2nd instant. I am to suggest, as regards the depôt, that since all relations with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company have hitherto been conducted by your department, an interview with Mr. Greenway might, if Sir E. Grey sees no objection, be arranged at the Foreign Office, at which a representative of this Office and Mr. Hood should also be present.

An extract is enclosed from the papers referred to in the telegram of the Government of India, dated the 5th February, 1912, regarding the provisional arrangements already made with the company for storage accommodation.

5. With regard to the reference made in the Treasury letter to the refusal of Sir E. Grey and Lord Morley in 1910 to entertain proposals for a lighting and buoyage scheme, I am to remark that, whereas at that time the urgent necessity for so large a scheme was not held to be established, in the interval another Power has laid down buoys, installed a light-vessel, and issued formal notices to mariners navigating the Shatt-el-Arab Channel; and the telegram of the Government of India, dated the 25th February, reporting the installation at Bushire of lights at the Russian and Turkish Consulates affords a further warning that the initiation of extensive measures by the British Government can no longer be avoided, and must not be delayed.

6. In conclusion, I am to state, in reply to your letter dated the 19th January last, and with reference to the letter addressed to this department by the Admiralty on the 24th February, 1912, of which a copy has been communicated to the Foreign Office, that Lord Crewe concurs in the view of the Government of India that it will be better not to change the position of the British lighted buoy at the outer bar in the Shatt-el-Arab till the situation *vis-à-vis* of Turkey has become clearer.

7. Copy of this letter is being communicated to the Admiralty.

I am, &c.,
R. RITCHIE.

Enclosure 1 in No. 78.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February 2, 1912.*

TENDER. See your telegram dated the 19th October last. No definite opinion as to accuracy of Mr. Hood's estimate can be formed on information at present in our possession. But we recommend, subject to further consideration when accurate estimate has been framed, that separate tender should be constructed, and we have asked Director, Royal Indian Marine, to follow the procedure indicated in the enclosure to paragraph 5 of despatch dated the 19th March, 1908, from Government of India in the Department of Military Supply.

Enclosure 2 in No. 78.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

(Telegraphic.) P. *February 5, 1912.*

PLEASE refer to your telegrams dated the 23rd and 24th ultimo. After consulting naval commander-in-chief and resident, Persian Gulf, we consider that Koweit, as proposed by the lighting committee, is less suitable locally for the depôt than land at Abadan which Anglo-Persian Oil Company subsequently acquired, see papers enclosed in weekly letter of the 2nd September, 1909, from Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department. As regards provision, within limits of company's concession, of accommodation for storage of spare buoys, &c., reference is invited to papers enclosed in weekly letters of the 26th January, 2nd February, 9th March, and 10th August, 1911, from Secretary, Foreign Department. As arrangement has been made in the matter between the company and ourselves, we suggest that Mr. Greenway, who has paid a visit to Abadan, should be interviewed by Mr. Hood or by an India Office representative, and should be asked whether, and on what terms, the extension of our arrangement into a depôt for lighthouse system could be agreed to by the company.

With reference to the points which your telegram of the 16th November raised, we concur in view of naval commander-in-chief who urges that, in the event of unwatched light in outer position being extinguished without attracting notice, there would be danger to ships coming from seaward to Shatt-el-Arab bar, and is of opinion that a light-ship is necessary if any light is placed in seaward position.

The substitution of lighted buoy for light-vessel proposed for Bushire is not open to objection, as fact of buoy going out would be noticed from the shore and at once remedied.

We are of opinion, as regards suggestion contained in your telegram dated the

24th ultimo, that, although it is not necessary for Turkish light-ship and British buoy to be located at the same spot, the maintenance of our own arrangements for the present, independently of the Turks, is important on principle, and we deprecate any change at this juncture, sufficient provision being, in the naval commander-in-chief's opinion, made for navigation as things stand. Provided light-ship is maintained 4 or 5 miles to seaward, our present gas buoy could be moved to position suggested when the general question is regulated with the Turkish Government.

Enclosure 3 in No. 78.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

February 9, 1912.

(Telegraphic.) P.

PLEASE refer to my telegram dated the 30th September, 1911, as to plant for Persian Gulf buoyage and lighting. Unless definite designs and requirements of (? lights and buoys) are obtained, no further information beyond Mr. Hood's report can be supplied by Director of Royal Indian Marine. Advice might be obtained from Mr. Hood.

Enclosure 4 in No. 78.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

February 25, 1912.

(Telegraphic.) P.

PERSIAN Gulf lighting. Please refer to my telegram dated the 5th instant. According to report by Sir P. Cox, flagstaff has been hoisted by Russian consul-general, and two powerful lanterns, simplex automatic make, burning incandescent light, are lighted by him at night. Four lights are now shown all night by Russian and Turkish consulates, and enquiries are being made by Lloyds and shipping companies. It is pointed out by naval commander-in-chief that our position is in this way being weakened, and that, in the event of preferential rights on the strength of our services to navigation in the Gulf being claimed by us, we shall be told in reply that other Powers have had to act for the safety of their own ships, owing to our not having done what has been acknowledged by us to be necessary. Immediate action, and installation of lighted buoys at Bahrein and of inner lighted buoy at Bushire in particular, is strongly urged by admiral. Orders of His Majesty's Government at as early a date as possible are solicited.

Enclosure 5 in No. 78.

The Marquess of Crewe to Government of India.

India Office, February 27, 1912.

(Telegraphic.) P.

LIGHTING of Persian Gulf. See your telegram dated the 25th February. Moiety of charges in respect of the two lighted buoys at Bahrein, and of the lighted buoy at the inner anchorage, Bushire, has been accepted by Treasury. Trinity House is being asked to procure these buoys so that they may be sent out with as little delay as possible. Steps are being taken to expedite other matters connected with the scheme

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Enclosure 6 in No. 78.

India Office to Trinity House.

India Office, February 27, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to state, for the information of the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House, that it has been decided to install with the least possible delay the lighted buoy at the inner anchorage, Bushire, and the two lighted buoys at Bahrein, which were recommended by the Committee of Enquiry on the Lighting and Buoyage of the Persian Gulf, dated the 29th April, 1909.

The Marquess of Crewe would be much obliged if the Elder Brethren could arrange to procure these buoys at their earliest convenience, to be shipped through the Store Department of this Office, who would be glad to learn as soon as possible

when they are ready for shipment, in order to obtain freight. It would be necessary to state the number of packages, &c., and this might be done in direct communication with the Store Department.

It will be remembered that the cost of the buoys was estimated at 600*l.* each in the supplementary report of Mr. D. W. Hood, dated the 28th June, 1909, and the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury have consented to defray from British revenues a moiety of this sum.

A further communication will be addressed to you regarding certain other portions of the scheme recommended by the committee.

I am, &c.

R. RITCHIE.

Enclosure 7 in No. 78.

India Office to Trinity House.

India Office, March 2, 1912.

Sir,

IN continuation of the letter from this Office, dated the 27th February, 1912, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to state, for the confidential information of the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House, that as a result of correspondence with the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the Treasury, it has now been decided, subject only to the assent of the last-named department in respect of the light-vessel for the Shatt-el-Arab, to provide and maintain in the Persian Gulf the lights and buoys set out in the list enclosed.

2. In reply to an enquiry by the Secretary of State as to the plant to be ordered from this country, the Government of India have suggested in a telegram, dated the 9th February, that Mr. D. W. Hood should be asked to advise, since no definite information is in their own possession as to the designs and requirements of the several lights and buoys beyond what is contained in Mr. Hood's report. The Marquess of Crewe would be greatly obliged if this suggestion could be acted on, and a statement be prepared for transmission to the Government of India showing in the case of each item of the list, whether lighthouse, light-vessel, or lighted or unlit buoy, what plant it would seem best to procure and send out from England.

3. In addition to the lights and buoys, the questions of a lighthouse tender and of a depôt have also been considered. It has been found impracticable to adapt as a tender any existing vessel, and, subject to further consideration when an accurate estimate has been framed, the Government of India have recommended the construction of a separate tender, for which, it is understood, the Director of the Royal Indian Marine is now preparing an estimate. The estimate of Mr. Hood was, it will be remembered, 30,000*l.* for initial, and 5,000*l.* for annual recurring expenditure, but Lord Crewe proposes to draw attention to the desirability of effecting a reduction in these figures, and meanwhile he would be glad to learn, for the assistance of the Government of India in preparing their estimate, on what data Mr. Hood's estimate was prepared, and whether, in view of the more moderate scheme that has now been decided on, the Elder Brethren are of opinion that a smaller and less expensive tender might be sufficient.

4. With regard to the lighthouse depôt, I am to enquire whether the sum of 22,000*l.* allowed for in Mr. Hood's estimate cannot also now be substantially reduced. Both the Secretary of State and the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury are desirous of confining the scheme to the barest requirements of the policy of His Majesty's Government, and they hope that some economy may be practicable as regards the depôt. It would be convenient if a list of the plant to be stored in the depôt, with estimates, could also be supplied.

5. As regards the location of the depôt, it has recently been suggested by the Government of India that this should be on land acquired by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company at Abadan Island instead of at Koweit, as proposed by the committee. A further communication will be made to you upon this subject, but it would be convenient if meanwhile particulars could be prepared, to be discussed, if necessary, at an informal conference, of the extent of land that would be required for the purpose, and the works to be installed.

6. The favour is requested of an early reply, since it is proposed now to proceed with the lighting and buoyage scheme with the least possible delay.

I am, &c.

R. RITCHIE.

Enclosure 8 in No. 78.

SCHEME approved by His Majesty's Government for the Lighting and Buoyage of the Persian Gulf (excluding the Tender and Depôt).

Item No.	Locality.	Site.	Lighthouses.	Light-vessels.	Buoys, lighted.	Buoys, unlit.	First Cost.	Annual Maintenance.
							£	£
1	Jask	Two miles north-west of Jask Point	..	..	..	1	100	15
2	Musandam	Little Quoin	1	..	..	..	12,500	400
3	Bunder Abbas ..	Off shoals east of Kishm	..	..	1	..	600	40
4	" " ..	Anchorage†	..	..	..	1	200	20
5	Tamb Island ..	Summit of island ..	1	..	..	..	7,500	350
6	Sheikh Shuaib Island ..	South-west point of island	1	..	..	..	8,000	400
7	Bushire*	Inner anchorage ..	..	..	1	..	600	40
8	"	Outer anchorage ..	..	..	1	..	600	40
9	Shatt-el-Arab ..	Four or five miles to seaward of existing British outer bar buoy‡	..	1	..	..	9,500	650
10	" ..	Inner bar	..	..	1	..	600	40
11	Bahrein*	Ras Kasifa	..	..	1	..	600	40
12	Bahrein*	West Spit	..	..	1	..	600	40
13	"	Off Jadum	..	..	..	1	100	15
		Total	3	1	6	3	41,500	2,090

* Ordered from Trinity House, February 27, 1912.

† The first scheme in respect of Bunder Abbas, set out in the summary to the report of the committee, dated the April 29, is here followed. See Viceroy's telegram of September 30, 1911.

‡ The cost of this buoy, with a supply of carbide, was 616*l*. 18*s*. 10*d*. The estimate in respect of maintenance was 40*l*. a-year, as in the case of the other lighted buoys.

Enclosure 9 in No. 78.

Lieutenant-Colonel Cox to Government of India.

(Extract.)
(Telegraphic.) *Bushire, January* 26, 1911.

AS regards storage for gear, the most economical and convenient arrangement would be for us to have warehouse on the river bank on the oil company's concession at Brain. I am about to meet next week two of the directors, and had intended to ask whether they acquiesced. Do you approve of my doing this?

Enclosure 10 in No. 78.

Government of India to Lieutenant-Colonel Cox.

(Extract.)
(Telegraphic.) *February* 1, 1911.

YOUR telegram of 26th January. The matter may be mentioned by you to the directors, but any arrangements they may agree upon would be tentative and subject to Government approval. Please telegraph result and submit definite proposals, with estimates of cost.

Enclosure 11 in No. 78.

Lieutenant-Colonel Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Fao, February* 22, 1911.

IN accordance with your authority conveyed in your telegram dated the 1st February, I sounded Greenway, director of the oil company, as to their providing

accommodation within limits of their concession for the storage of buoys. Provisionally, the company will be happy to provide such accommodation and to supply any skilled labour ashore that may be needed.

Enclosure 12 in No. 78.

Government of India to Lieutenant-Colonel Cox.

(Telegraphic.) P. *August* 8, 1911.

STORAGE of spare buoys and moorings. Your telegram of the 22nd February. The Director, Royal Indian Marine, considers that the proposal contained in your telegram of the 26th January is the best that can be made. The arrangement must, however, be tentative for the present. Government of India will now await your definite proposals and estimates of cost.

Enclosure 13 in No. 78.

Lieutenant-Colonel Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic,) P. *Bushire, August* 8, 1911.

YOUR telegram dated the 8th August. I sent my reply regarding storage of spare buoys and moorings to Director, Royal Indian Marine, under my letter of the 6th August, and asked him to consider the arrangements suggested and to communicate his views to Government.

[9575] No. 79.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 46.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 4, 1912.

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that Turkish reply to our counter-proposals respecting the Bagdad Railway and Persian Gulf had now been finally decided upon, and would be sent to Turkish Ambassador in London this week by Councillor of Embassy in London, accompanied by Reshid Boy, conseiller légiste, who will be attached to Ambassador.

[9224] No. 80.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

(No. 104.)
(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 4, 1912.

I READ substance of Viceroy's telegram to Lord Crewe of 1st March to Italian Ambassador, explained to him the feeling that would be caused in India, and expressed the strong hope that in whatever measures Italian Government took in the war they would not interfere with pilgrim traffic. Ambassador had never heard of any intention to blockade Jeddah and Yembo, and said he would telegraph at once to his Government. You should speak to Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject.

[9689] No. 81.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 5.)

(No. 14.) Treaty.
(Telegraphic.) R. *Rome, March* 5, 1912.

YOUR telegram No. 7, Treaty, of 9th February.

Reply as to pilgrim traffic states that the general pilgrimage season will this year fall in months of October to December. Should hostilities not be concluded then, due consideration will be given to the request of His Majesty's Government, having regard to special conditions entailed.

As regards constant limitation of traffic, especially between Suakin and Jeddah, Minister of Marine is ready to instruct commandant in the Red Sea not to impede

outward journeys when there are no grounds to suspect contraband trade. For homeward journeys Italian Government must exercise very strict right of visiting ships to prevent contrabandists in disguise as pilgrims making for Tripoli. They suggest that Suakin authorities might be instructed to co-operate in this vigilance, which would necessitate less rigorous execution of the Italian control.

Text by post.

[9757] No. 82.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 6.)

India Office, March 4, 1912.

Sir,

WITH reference to the letter of this Office dated the 2nd instant, communicating copy of Viceroy's telegram of the 1st March, 1912, regarding the possible extension to Jeddah and Yembo of the Italian blockade in the neighbourhood of Hodeidah, I am directed to state, for the information of Secretary Sir E. Grey, that the Marquess of Crewe entirely concurs in the opinion of the Government of India as to the serious effect that such a measure would have upon the pilgrim traffic, and the resentment that it would be likely to cause among the Mahommedan population in India and elsewhere.

I am therefore to suggest that, if Sir E. Grey sees no objection, the anxiety felt by His Majesty's Indian subjects should be strongly represented to the Italian Government, and that they should be asked to avoid interference with the traffic, both generally and with regard to the extension of the blockade to the two places named in particular.

It is for consideration whether this representation should not be made forthwith, instead of waiting, as proposed by the Government of India, until information is received that the extension of the blockade is in fact intended by the Italian Government.

It will be remembered that His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome reported in regard to Hodeidah on the 4th February last, that the Italian Government would cordially co-operate within the limits of their capacity in protecting British interests.

I am, &c.
R. RITCHIE.

[9769] No. 83.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 34.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Rome, March 5, 1912.*

YOUR telegram No. 104 of 4th March.

Minister for Foreign Affairs assures me that question of extending blockade to Jeddah and Yambo has never been raised, and he does not see why it should be. He deprecates any desire to impede pilgrim traffic, and recapitulated communication repeated in my telegram No. 14, Treaty, of 5th March.

[10020] No. 84.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 7.)

India Office, March 6, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 26th February, 1912, regarding enquiries made by the Italian Government as to the boundaries of the British protectorate of Aden.

As the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is aware, the resident at Aden apprehends that the Italian Government desire to establish a protectorate on the northern side of the British frontier. The Marquess of Crewe is not aware what foundation there is for such an apprehension, but in a letter, dated the 28th October, 1911, which formed an enclosure in this Office letter, dated the 1st February, the resident reported that "the Italian Government are constantly and unceasingly attempting to

intrigue with the Arab chiefs," although at that date the principal scene of their activity lay on the other side of the protectorate.

It seems intrinsically improbable that the Italian Government entertain any far-reaching schemes of this nature; but it is possible that they contemplate the eventual occupation of a point on the coast—such as Turba or Sheikh Said—which, in the hands of a hostile Power, would constitute a serious danger to British interests. Lord Crewe, therefore, while concurring generally in the terms of the communication which it is proposed to make to them, provided that Sir E. Grey is satisfied that they will draw from it the conclusion indicated in the penultimate paragraph of your letter, would prefer, if there is any doubt on that point, that an explicit statement should be made to them at once, to the effect that the British Government could not acquiesce in their retention of any part of the coast-line referred to on the conclusion of peace.

As regards the description of the territory which is not to be alienated, I am to observe that it would appear from paragraphs 1 and 2 of the *procès-verbal*, dated the 20th April, 1905, that the apex of the triangle is Jebel Numan and not Bark-am-Ashara.

The chart enclosed in your letter is returned herewith.

I am, &c.
R. RITCHIE.

[8196] No. 85.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 93.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, March 7, 1912.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 161 of the 21st ultimo relative to the suspicions aroused in the mind of the Turkish Government in consequence of certain circumstances connected with the relief of the escort of His Majesty's consulate-general at Bagdad, and to the measures taken by you to deal with the case, which have my approval.

Your Excellency's despatch above referred to appears to have crossed my despatch No. 63 of the 13th ultimo on the same subject, and is therefore not quite explicit on one of the points raised by the Turkish Ambassador at this Court in connection with this subject, viz., the allegation made by his Highness that the rifles belonging to the outgoing detachment were retained in addition to those brought by the relieving force.

I should be glad if your Excellency would furnish me with your observations on this complaint.

I transmit to your Excellency herewith copies of a letter to the India Office and of a note to Tewfik Pasha on this subject.*

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[8196] No. 86.

Sir Edward Grey to Tewfik Pasha.

HIS Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Turkish Ambassador, and has the honour to recall to His Highness's memory a conversation which took place between him and Sir A. Nicolson on the 15th ultimo relative to certain circumstances connected with the recent relief of the escort of His Majesty's consulate-general at Bagdad.

On that occasion Sir A. Nicholson promised that enquiry should be made into the facts of the case, and Sir E. Grey accordingly addressed to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople a despatch instructing his Excellency to furnish a report on the subject.

A despatch has now been received from Sir G. Lowther, which, however, appears to have been written before the receipt of the instructions above alluded to, reporting that, contrary to the information which has reached the Sublime Porte, the numbers of the escort have not been increased in the last five years beyond its normal complement of thirty-six, except by the addition of a bugler two years ago, and the only extra men

* Nos. 86 and 87.

who arrived on the occasion in question were three non-combatants cooks required for caste purposes, as the outgoing Moslems had been replaced by Hindus.

It further appears that there was nothing unusual in the manner of the men's arrival, as it is their general practice to march to the consulate-general under arms, except on certain occasions, when they are landed from boats without traversing the town.

As regards the alleged increase in the amount of ammunition accompanying the relieving detachment over that usually brought on such occasions, it is reported that the quantity was in fact unusual, and had been dispatched in error by the Indian military authorities. For this mistake Sir E. Grey has the honour to express his regret.

As regards the remaining allegation made by Tewfik Pasha, viz., the increase in the number of rifles at the disposal of the escort owing to the retention of those belonging to the outgoing detachment, in addition to those brought by the relieving force, Sir G. Lowther's despatch does not appear to furnish an explanation, and his Excellency's attention has been recalled to the point.

Foreign Office, March 7, 1912.

[8196] No. 87.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Foreign Office, March 7, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copies of correspondence with His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople relative to the suspicions aroused in the mind of the Turkish Government in consequence of certain circumstances connected with the relief of the escort of His Majesty's consulate-general at Bagdad.*

Copy of a note to the Turkish Ambassador at this Court is likewise enclosed.†

I am to suggest that, if the Marquess of Crewe sees no objection, the attention of the Government of India should be called to the matter, as proposed by Sir G. Lowther in his despatch, with a view to the adoption of the precautions indicated by his Excellency, as a means of preventing a repetition of the incident.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[10206] No. 88.

Viscount Kitchener to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 10.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Cairo, March 8, 1912.*

WITH reference to your telegram No. 16 of yesterday.

It is most unlikely that contrabandists from Hedjaz would in any case attempt to reach Tripoli viâ Suakin; nevertheless, the local authorities will be warned to exercise vigilance in this respect. It appears to me that the existing state of affairs in Hedjaz may very probably cause some danger to pilgrimage. The Italians are apparently supplying arms to Sheikh Idrisi, who is in revolt and may make an armed attempt on the holy places. This would endanger the position of Shereef of Mecca, and put the whole of Hedjaz in a blaze. Mussulmans here and in the Soudan are doing what they can to influence Idrisi to remain quiet while the present state of hostility with Italy exists.

[9689] No. 89.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Foreign Office, March 8, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a telegram which was addressed to His

* Nos. 40 and 57. † No. 86.

Majesty's Ambassador at Rome on the 9th February,* expressing the hope of His Majesty's Government that the Italian Government would show every consideration consistent with the necessities of war to pilgrim traffic in the Red Sea.

Sir R. Rodd has now communicated the reply of the Italian Government to this request in a telegram, copy of which I am also to transmit herewith.†

The assurances contained in the first part of this telegram appear to Sir E. Grey to be satisfactory, and in regard to the suggestion in the latter portion he has telegraphically requested His Majesty's agent and consul-general at Cairo to offer his observations.

On seeing the telegram addressed on the 1st March by the Viceroy of India to the Marquess of Crewe, relative to the same subject, Sir E. Grey at once telegraphed to Sir R. Rodd instructing him to renew to the Italian Government the expression of the strong hope of His Majesty's Government that there would be no interference with the pilgrim traffic. Copy of this telegram is also annexed ‡ Sir E. Grey further spoke to the Italian Ambassador in the same sense.

The Marquess of Crewe will observe from Sir R. Rodd's reply§ that the Italian Government have repeated the assurance already given, adding that the question of extending the blockade to Jeddah and Yambo, to which reference is made in Lord Hardinge's above-mentioned telegram and in your immediate letter of the 4th March, has never been, and that there is no reason why it should be, raised.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[10274] No. 90.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 26. Treaty.)

Sir, *Rome, March 6, 1912.*

WITH reference to my telegram in this series No. 14 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of the reply of the Italian Government to the note which I have addressed to them on the subject of pilgrim ships going to or leaving the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
R. RODD.

Enclosure 1 in No. 90.

The Marquis di San Giuliano to Sir R. Rodd.

Sir, *Rome, March 4, 1912.*

I DID not fail to communicate to the Ministry of Marine the contents of your Excellency's note of the 9th February, relative to the request of the British naval authorities that every consideration, which is consistent with the necessities of war, may be shown to pilgrim ships proceeding to the Hedjaz.

His Excellency the Minister of Marine points out in reply that there might perhaps be a misunderstanding as to the period at which the pilgrimages of Mussulmans to their holy places usually take place; indeed, according to the prescriptions of the Koran (chapter 2, verses 192 and 193) they should take place in the months of Chewal, Dhoul Kadeh and Dhoul Hidjich of the Mussulman year, which in 1912, corresponds to year 133 of the Hejira, so that these months correspond to October, November, and December of the current year.

From information received from the naval commander at Massowah, of whose telegram a copy is enclosed, it appears that the pilgrimages take place at a period still fairly remote, and it would therefore seem premature at present to lay down regulations about the treatment to be accorded to pilgrim ships.

Should the war still be continuing at that time, the British Government's request will be taken into consideration as far as is permitted by the exigencies of warlike operations by sea and land.

There remains then to be considered the limited traffic of pilgrims who proceed,

* To Sir R. Rodd, No. 7, Treaty (Telegraphic), February 9, 1912.
† No. 81. ‡ No. 80. § No. 83.

especially from Suakin, to Jeddah and thence to Mecca, without being specially bound to prescribed periods, and who are of more particular interest to the British flag under which they are usually transported.

The Royal Minister of Marine will take steps to instruct Commander Cerrina to put no obstacles in the way of this traffic, especially in the case of the outward voyage, provided there are no grounds for suspecting contraband or any other action harmful to our interests. But in regard to the return voyage his Excellency maintains the most ample reserves respecting our absolute right of search in the broadest sense of the term, in order to prevent Turkish and Arab contingents disguised as pilgrims, from mixing with the returning pilgrims with the intention of gaining the other shore of the Red Sea and thence proceeding by land in order to join the combatants in Cyrenaica fighting against the Italian troops.

In bringing the above to your Excellency's knowledge, I may add, that should His Majesty's Government see fit to give instructions to the Suakin authorities to combat the above-mentioned danger, namely, the passage of contingents destined for the seat of war, it would be of mutual advantage, for the necessity of visit by Italian ships would be diminished and the movements of pilgrims would be more free.

When your Excellency shall have been pleased to lay this suggestion before His Majesty's Government, I should be grateful if you would inform me in due course how it has been received.

I have, &c.
DI SAN GIULIANO.

Enclosure 2 in No. 90.

Naval Commander at Massowah to the Royal Minister of Marine.

(Telegraphic.) *February* 24, 1912.

"AN individual of twenty-eight years residence at Jeddah, where he has also exercised the functions of consular-agent, confirms what I have been able to learn from various sources, namely, that pilgrimages take place between the two months preceding and following the feast of Bairam, for which they must be at Mecca. This feast fell early in December, the transport movement is therefore now terminated, as is actually proved by the absence at present of steamers at Camaran quarantine station. This year the feast falls at the end of November and the first pilgrims will therefore arrive at the end of September."

[10206] No. 91.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

(No. 113.)
(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 9, 1912.

LORD KITCHENER'S telegram No. 10 of 8th March: Pilgrim traffic in Red Sea.

You should inform Italian Government of first sentence.

[10379] No. 92.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 10.)

(No. 40.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Rome, March* 10, 1912.

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs, having taken note of recent question in Parliament respecting difficulties to shipping occasioned by extinction of Turkish lights, suggested to me, with a view to rendering service to His Majesty's Government and British navigation, he would, if you approved of suggestion, propose here that until conclusion of hostilities Italy should undertake to maintain lights on Turkish islands to the south of Red Sea, restoring rocks in question for which she had no use at end of war. Having command of the sea, he thought that it would not be difficult for Italy to do this, but would not moot the subject unless you approve.

[10456] No. 93.

Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 28. Secret.)
Sir, *Tehran, February* 9, 1912.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 210 of the 31st October last, I have the honour to report that on the disappearance of the Medjliss I thought the moment a favourable one for approaching the Persian Government in regard to the lighthouse on the island of Sheikh Shuaib, and on the 17th ultimo I mentioned the scheme to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting the Persian Government to authorise Sheikh Ahmad Hamadi of Mugam, the chieftain of the island, to grant the site for the lighthouse. His Excellency promised to consult his colleagues in the Cabinet and to give me an answer shortly.

On the 31st ultimo I enquired as to the decision of the Persian Government, and his Excellency replied that no definite decision had been taken, but that he thought that there would be no difficulty about the lighthouse provided that it were constructed and worked by Persia. I pointed out that this was not what was desired. The buoyage and lighting of the Persian Gulf had for many years been in British hands, and it would be undesirable to make an exception in the case of the lighthouse on Sheikh Shuaib, besides which, if the lighthouse were worked by the Persian Government, which had no experience of such matters, there could be no guarantee that it would be efficiently done. His Excellency appeared to be under the impression that the cost of the erection of the lighthouse would be 4,000*l.*, and I therefore told him that we estimated the initial cost at 8,000*l.* and the running expenses at 400*l.* a-year. His Excellency took note of what I said, and promised to give me a definite answer in a few days. He added that in any case the lighthouse would have to fly the Persian flag, and I told him that personally I thought there would be no objection to this.

Yesterday I received a visit from the "chef de cabinet" of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who handed me the accompanying memorandum of the terms on which the Persian Government were prepared to consent to the construction of the lighthouse.

I do not know how far His Majesty's Government would be prepared to accept these terms. I explained to Moin-el-Vezareh, the "chef de cabinet," that the question of light dues in the Persian Gulf was a large one and had not yet been considered. It would, I presume, be difficult to levy separate dues for one particular lighthouse, and, should His Majesty's Government consent to the Persian Government's bearing the cost of the construction and running of the lighthouse, some arrangement would have to be made whereby a certain proportion of the total dues eventually collected in the Gulf would be paid to the Persian Government.

I have, &c.
G. BARCLAY

Enclosure in No. 93.

Memorandum.

THE Persian Government authorises the erection, at their own cost, of a lighthouse on the coast of Sheikh Shuaib Island for the convenience of navigation in the Gulf.

2. Prior to the work being put in hand, the contractors will submit to the Persian Government the rough estimate of the outlay (the "cahier des charges") and the plan of the structure.

3. The upkeep and superintendence of the lighthouse, as well as the working of the apparatus, is temporarily delegated by the Persian Government, for convenience sake, to the Anglo-Indian naval officers.

4. The cost of such maintenance will be borne by the Persian Government, who will be previously furnished with an approximate statement of the annual expense.

5. The Anglo-Indian naval officers will be requested to collect the tolls (beconage) on behalf of the Persian Government and keep the accounts.

6. In each year, two months after the 1st of Hemal (21st or March), a statement of account showing the receipts and expenses of the previous year will be handed to the Persian Government.

7. The receipts will serve to cover the expenses of administration, and will, moreover, constitute a sinking fund for the capital expended in building the lighthouse.

8. The regulations concerning the working of the lighthouse, the manner in which the tolls will be collected, and the amount of such dues will be submitted to the Persian Government, who will have the right of inspection.

9. The Persian flag will permanently fly over the lighthouse.

[10394] No. 94.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 187.)
Sir,

Constantinople, March 6, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah, reporting on disturbances among the Arabs of the Tigris Valley and measures taken by Ottoman authorities.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 94.

Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 9.)
Sir,

Bussorah, February 10, 1912.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 15 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to report that the Arabs of Abdul Kerim-es-Seybood are causing disturbances in the vicinity of Ezra's tomb. The reasons alleged are the old outstanding questions connected with the lease of mukata'as and dissatisfaction at the arrangements made by the local authorities.

Three lighters, loaded respectively with dates, sugar, and coal have been looted, and two empty lighters stripped of their gear and the crew's provisions taken. The "Marmaris" escorted twenty-eight lighters loaded with grain from Ezra's tomb to Kurna, which arrived safely yesterday. It is reported that many lighters are detained near Shattrat-el-Amara, Amara, and Kut-el-Amara in consequence of these disturbances.

Messrs. Lynch's vessels, the "Mejidieh" and "Blosse Lynch," arrived safely last night under Turkish convoy, and the two stern-wheelers "Messoodi" and "Muzzafferi" preceded them, also under escort. The "Marmaris" and the Turkish motor-gunboat are patrolling the river between Ezra's tomb and Kurna, the scene of those disturbances.

I have, &c.
F. E. CROW.

[10402] No. 95.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 195. Confidential.)
Sir,

Constantinople, March 6, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with the instructions contained in your despatch No. 37, Confidential, of the 30th January, I have communicated to Sir R. Crawford copy of the Board of Trade's letter of the 10th January last, and have likewise conveyed to him the substance of the messages regarding the specific tariff and construction of Customs buildings at Bagdad and Bussorah, as instructed in the third and fourth paragraphs of your above-mentioned despatch.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[8930] No. 96.

Foreign Office to Treasury.

(Confidential.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, March 11, 1912.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to state, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, that he has recently had under consideration, in consultation with the Secretary of State for India, the question of making a survey of certain portions of the Persian Gulf.

In a letter dated the 14th March, 1911, the naval commander-in-chief, East Indies, reported as follows:—

"The charts of the Persian Gulf which cover the tracks used by ships proceeding from the Shatt-el-Arab to Koweit, from Koweit anywhere to the southward and into Bahrein from the northward, are most inadequate and untrustworthy; new dangers are often being reported, and it is highly probable that we do not know nearly all that exist."

Although not treated in the correspondence on the subject as part of the scheme for improving the lighting and buoyage of the Persian Gulf, the proposal for the survey has the same object, i.e., the improvement of navigation in these waters by British agency—an object which closely concerns the permanent interests of Great Britain as the predominant maritime Power, and which is becoming increasingly important as the Bagdad Railway approaches completion.

After full consideration of the details, in concert with the Admiralty and the Government of India, the Secretary of State for India estimates that the cost of carrying out the work in question, by employing the R.I.M.S. "Palinurus," will be about 4,667*l.* 8*s.* per annum for a period of eight years, although the assistance to be rendered by His Majesty's ship "Odin" as opportunity offers will probably reduce this period to some extent.

The Secretary of State for India in Council is prepared to defray from Indian revenue a moiety of the expenditure on the condition that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury will accept the other moiety as a charge against the British Exchequer.

I am to express Sir E. Grey's hope that the Lords Commissioners will assent to this charge; the claim which His Majesty's Government have advanced that, in matters relating to the Persian Gulf, this country is entitled to special consideration, is largely based upon the services rendered by Great Britain in the past in facilitating commerce by the suppression of piracy, carrying out of surveys, and by supplying other aids to navigation.

Recent investigations have, however, served to show that existing surveys are inadequate, and, such being the case, there is a consensus of opinion that fresh surveys should be made by British agency before the importance of the Persian Gulf as an international trade route becomes more accentuated—a development which is generally anticipated upon the completion of the Bagdad Railway.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[10800] No. 97.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received March 12.)

(Secret.)
Sir,

Board of Trade, March 12, 1912.

I AM directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th February, transmitting copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople with regard to the effect upon British commercial interests of a suggested modification of the *tracé* of the Bagdad Railway, and to offer the following observations thereon for Sir E. Grey's consideration:—

1. As by far the greater part of the transit trade from Bagdad into Persia by the Khanikin route is British or British-Indian, and is in classes of goods with which German trade in Persia does not seriously compete, the Board cannot doubt that the construction of a railway, replacing the present inadequate means of transport, would be of substantial benefit to British trade. That it would be of advantage to such trade

as can be done by other countries, and especially to German trade, is of course true, but unless the Bagdad Company, in working such a railway, adopted discrimination of a very pronounced character, the Board are disposed to think that the advantages resulting from the construction of the line would accrue chiefly to British trade, in view of its greater extent and wider local connections. Discrimination of a serious character would most probably be avoided by the company, as being likely to provoke diplomatic intervention.

2. As regards the possibility of guarding against discrimination by means of an agreement between the railway companies operating to the north and south of Bagdad respectively, Sir Gerard Lowther refers in his despatch to an opinion expressed by the Board of Trade in their letter of the 7th April, 1911, to the effect that equality of treatment "could probably be attained without serious difficulty by an agreement." I am to point out that their opinion related to the event of Great Britain having control to the extent of at least 50 per cent. of the southern railway, and that it was indicated in that letter that the case in which Great Britain would have only a smaller share of representation on the Southern Railway Company was totally different, and presented much greater difficulty.

3. Sir G. Lowther expresses the opinion that, so far as the Khanikin line is concerned, the contingency contemplated in the preceding paragraph might be avoided by the transference of the concession for that line to the proposed international company for the construction and operation of the line between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf. On this I am to observe that the Board have no information which leads them to suppose that the Bagdad Railway Company would consent to such a transference, since the Khanikin branch seems likely to be commercially one of the most valuable parts of their undertaking; and as, so far as they are aware, His Majesty's Government have never hitherto put forward any claim to the construction of such a line, or, indeed, with respect to any railway construction northward of Bagdad, the Board, on the information before them, doubt the practicability of their doing so at the present stage with any useful result.

If, however, Sir Gerard Lowther is in possession of any information which leads him to think that it is reasonably possible to secure the transference suggested, the Board admit that a new situation is created, which appears to them to require that the whole question of British participation in the new international company should be examined afresh in the light of this new fact.

4. Subject to the last observation, the Board of Trade, as at present advised, see no reason to modify the views expressed in their previous letter, and they are relieved that the course of events has obviated any possibility of His Majesty's Government taking up a position with regard to the suggested modification which they consider would not have been to the best interests of British trade.

I am, &c.
H. LLEWELLYN SMITH.

[9319] No. 98.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 99.)
Foreign Office, March 12, 1912.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 173 of the 28th ultimo relative to the state of business at the custom-house at Bagdad, which necessitates an immediate settlement of the question of the construction of the new buildings.

I entirely recognise the urgency of the situation as revealed in your Excellency's despatch, and clearly understand that, unless the present congestion is relieved without delay, the Customs administration may find themselves obliged to come to terms with the Bagdad Railway Company.

In view, however, of the fact that the reply of the Turkish Government to the proposals of His Majesty's Government, contained in their memorandum of July 1911, is expected to arrive immediately, I trust that it may be found possible to defer any action of the kind indicated, at least till I have had the opportunity of considering that document.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[10929] No. 99.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 13.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 12th March, 1912, regarding the dredging of the Shatt-el-Arab bar.

India Office, March 13, 1912.

Enclosure in No. 99.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

(Telegraphic.) P. *March 12, 1912.*

PLEASE refer to correspondence enclosed in letter No. 51 from Secretary, Political Department, India Office, regarding dredging of bar of Shatt-el-Arab.

Any suggestion to permit company to work on behalf of Turkish authorities, or under direction of Turks in any way, is opposed by naval commander-in-chief, copy of whose letter was sent to the India Office on 29th February, on the ground that, politically, claim to sole control of the river would be given to the Turks. He regards the proposal as dangerous on practical grounds, as construction of regular training works before, or simultaneously with, dredging operations will, in his opinion, be necessary, and behaviour of river will have to be watched during the same operations. The silting up of the channel connecting Bahmanshir and Shatt-el-Arab is, the admiral considers, the cause of the recent increase of depth upon the bar. Most disastrous results might ensue from any interference with this channel, even with object of increasing its depth, unless effect on shoals recently formed is closely observed at the same time. Before any work is undertaken, admiral recommends successful conclusion of negotiations with Turkish Government for a commission to control the river, and subsequent appointment of competent engineers to draw up a scheme for dealing with the whole question on comprehensive lines. This view has our concurrence.

[11094] No. 100.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 14.)

Sir,

India Office, March 13, 1912.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to forward, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a telegram that has been received from the Government of India on the subject of the Turkish post on Bubiyan Island.

It would seem that it is the report mentioned by Mr. Consul Crow in his despatch of 22nd December last that originated the instructions which he has since received and to which Sir Percy Cox refers.

The Marquess of Crewe agrees that it would be most undesirable that the Turkish Government should be permitted, on the eve of negotiations, to take any action that would disturb the *status quo*. At the same time he is unwilling that any action should be taken on our part that would prejudice those negotiations. If, therefore, Sir Edward Grey concurs, he would propose only to approve the dispatch of a gunboat if there is no other way in which trustworthy information as to the strength of the Turkish post can be obtained.

I have, &c.
R. RITCHIE.

Enclosure in No. 100.

Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe.

(Telegraphic.) P. *March 11, 1912.*

RESIDENT, Persian Gulf, telegraphs to following effect regarding Bubiyan:—

"I am demi-officially informed by consul at Bussorah that he has received instructions from Sir G. Lowther that any sign of Turks taking steps to strengthen their military

post at Bubiyan should be reported by telegraph. I am taking the usual steps to get the necessary information which consul asks for my co-operation.

"The surmise cannot be avoided, in view of the above, that the Turks are seeking to strengthen their position at points in issue, now that, in the British note of 29th July, we have placed our cards on the table.

"Advisability of letting one of His Majesty's ships casually visit the port in a friendly way, and report its present strength, which consisted of twenty men originally, will perhaps be considered by the Government of India."

Authority is solicited to give effect to proposed dispatch of gunboat in manner suggested, as to the desirability of which I concur in resident's view.

[10379] No. 101.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Foreign Office, March 14, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to enquire whether the Board of Trade are in possession of any information showing the degree of practical inconvenience caused to British shipping by the continued extinction of the Turkish lights in the Red Sea.

Sir E. Grey is aware that great inconvenience was apprehended from this measure, but he has not been informed as to how far these apprehensions have been verified.

I am, &c.

LOUIS MALLET.

[10379] No. 102.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Foreign Office, March 14, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a telegram which has been received from His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome,* reporting an offer made by the Italian Government to undertake the maintenance of the Turkish lights in the Red Sea, with a view to rendering service to His Majesty's Government and British shipping.

Such action would undoubtedly be of advantage to the latter, but Sir E. Grey sees certain grave objections to its encouragement.

In the first place, it would hardly be consistent with the duties as a neutral for His Majesty's Government to encourage one belligerent to occupy any portion of the territory of the other.

Secondly, the Turkish Government have considered the extinction of these lights necessary to Turkish interests, and have not seen their way to fulfil the hope expressed by His Majesty's Government that it might be possible to relight them. Were Italy now to undertake their maintenance, it might appear that the action was taken mainly in British interests, or even at the instigation of His Majesty's Government. Such an impression could not but be prejudicial to this country in Moslem opinion.

Sir E. Grey would therefore propose to instruct Sir R. Rodd to thank the Italian Government, but to say that it would hardly be consistent with the duties of His Majesty's Government as a neutral to express approval or disapproval of the procedure proposed.

Before dispatching the suggested reply Sir E. Grey would, however, be glad to be favoured with the views of the Marquess of Crewe.

I am, &c.

LOUIS MALLET.

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* No. 92.

[11127] No. 103.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 15.)

(No. 42.)
(Telegraphic.) R. *Rome, March* 14, 1912.

OFFICIAL agency to-day announces in contradiction to various press rumours as to naval movements that there is no Italian ship of war in Ægean.

[11284] No. 104.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 15.)

(No. 60.)
(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 15, 1912.

ROME telegram No. 40 of 10th March.

If it become known that Italians had undertaken to relight lights to the south of the Red Sea in agreement with us it would certainly create an unfortunate impression here.

[9550] No. 105.

Foreign Office to Treasury.

Foreign Office, March 15, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to inform you that he caused a copy of your letter of the 13th ultimo, relative to the question of the lighting and buoyage of the Persian Gulf, to be forwarded to the India Office, with the request that he might be furnished with any observations which the Marquis of Crewe might have to make on the subject.

I am to transmit to you herewith copies of a further letter from that department setting forth his Lordship's views, with which those of Sir E. Grey are in complete agreement, and of the reply which has been returned to this communication.*

As regards the request contained in the last paragraph of your letter under reference for information as to the possibility of an agreement between this country, Turkey, and Persia, for the collection of dues, I am to state that negotiations are still proceeding with the Turkish Government on the general question of Anglo-Turkish relations, and that this point is one of those under discussion.

As soon as a solution of the question is reached, Sir E. Grey will not fail to cause the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to be informed of it.

I am, &c.

LOUIS MALLET.

[9550] No. 106.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Foreign Office, March 15, 1912.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant relative to the question of the lighting and buoyage of the Persian Gulf, and to transmit to you herewith copy of a communication which he has caused to be addressed to the Treasury on the subject.†

With reference to the fourth paragraph of your letter, I am to state that, as soon as Sir E. Grey learns the nature of the reply to the letter which you addressed to the Trinity House on the 27th ultimo, he will be happy to arrange with Mr. Greenway for an interview at this Office with a representative of your department and Mr. Hood.

A copy of this letter has been sent to the Admiralty.

I am, &c.

LOUIS MALLET.

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* Nos. 78 and 106.

† No. 105.

[11449] No. 107.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 197.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March 11, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received a telegram from His Majesty's vice-consul at Hodeidah, stating that the Italians bombarded Midi about the beginning of this month, the city being attacked simultaneously by Seyyid Idriss's rebels. The attack was successful, and the Turkish garrison of about sixty surrendered.

Ten battalions have been dispatched, Mr. Richardson states, during the past fortnight from Hodeidah with artillery in the direction of the rebel head-quarters, and the Imam Yahya is sending a force to intercept any escape of Seyyid Idriss into the mountains. It is intended, Mr. Richardson adds, to begin operations against the latter on a large scale, and an army is believed to be advancing from Assir to co-operate with the expedition from the Yemen.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

[11451] No. 108.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 199.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March 11, 1912.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 39 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith despatches from His Majesty's consul-general at Beirout respecting the destruction of a Turkish gun-boat and torpedo-boat by the Italian fleet.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 108.

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 11.)

Sir, *Beirout, February 28, 1912.*

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 5 to 12, I have the honour to report as follows:—

Two Italian cruisers, the "Guiseppe Garibaldi" and the "Francesco Ferruccio," and an armed merchant-vessel appeared off Beirout at 7 o'clock on the morning of the 24th February with decks cleared for action. The sea was quite calm. As they arrived each vessel fired a shot over the town as a warning. The two Ottoman boats in the harbour, the gun-boat "Avni Ullah" (1,500 ton, 8 cannons, 150 men) and the "Angora," torpedo-boat, had got up steam immediately the enemy was sighted. Upon the firing of the first shots the Turkish gun-boat sent an officer to the admiral in command to find out his intentions; and he received an ultimatum addressed to the Governor-General, of which copy is annexed. This document, of which a copy was sent to the German consul for communication to his colleagues, only reached the Governor-General at 8·40, or twenty minutes before the expiration of one hour's grace supposed to have been given, and the consuls-general received it two or three hours later. Hazim Bey, after a hurried consultation with the commander of the "Avni Ullah" on the landing stage, which was crowded with an excited mob, decided that the vessels should go out and surrender as soon as they had sufficient steam, which he was told would be in ten minutes, and he was going into the harbour-master's office to send a reply in that sense to the admiral when the latter opened fire at 9 A.M.

(Confidential.)

(It would appear that, acting in accordance with standing instructions from Constantinople in anticipation of such eventuality, the boats were to have been taken out of the harbour and sunk; but before the boats could move the Italians had opened fire.)

The two Italian ships (the merchant-vessel having cleared out of sight) had steamed into St. George's Bay to about 7 kilom. to the east of the harbour, so as to face

Enclosure 1* in No. 108.

Proclamation by Italian Naval Commander.

J'AI l'honneur de sommer votre Excellence de remettre tout de suite en mon pouvoir et de faire remorquer hors du port avant 9 A.M. heures d'aujourd'hui, 24 février, la canonnière et le torpilleur turcs qui sont dans le port de Beirut. Les susdits navires devront éteindre sur-le-champ les feux de leurs chaudières, s'ils sont allumés, et ne plus les allumer.

Je regrette de ne pouvoir concéder aucun délai, et j'ai l'espoir que vôtre Excellence me fera l'honneur d'une prompte réponse et ne me forcera pas à appliquer l'article 2 de la neuvième convention de la Deuxième Conférence de La Haye.

Le Contre-Amiral,
Commandant Naval Supérieur Italien,

Beirut, le 24 février, 1912.

the entrance. The port was empty of steamers and had been so for two days; it is obvious the time had been chosen with care.

The crowd of spectators on the quay and in the port, who expected that the fight would take place in the open, fled or got under cover of the buildings near the port. The "Avni Ullah" responded to the fire. The Italians, repeatedly missing their aim, sent shells into the custom-house and the Bank of Salonica, and fifty-two civilians and two policemen were killed. Both the Turkish boats were hit several times and considerably disabled. One shell pierced both decks of the "Avni Ullah," exploding near the magazine and setting her on fire, upon which the crew hauled down the flag and abandoned her. The firing ceased at 9·20, and one of the ships steamed up to within 200 metres of the entrance, and at about 10 A.M. recommenced firing, this time launching two torpedoes: the one aimed at the "Angora" hit a lighter which was blown into splinters, and the other struck the bows of the "Avni Ullah," which turned over on her side and sunk at 10·30, when firing ceased.

Meanwhile, unable to discover the torpedo-boat which was moored further in the harbour close to the Ottoman Bank and was masked by the smoke of the burning gun-boat, the Italian cruisers steamed close past the harbour to see the effect of their attack, and went off to the north, to return, hugging the coast, at about 1·30. One of them took up a position not 100 yards from the entrance and directed eight or ten shots at the torpedo-boat, three or four of which struck the Ottoman Bank, doing great damage. The bank, fortunately, was empty at the time. One shell went into a building next the bank. The Italian ships then steamed slowly away. The loss of life on board the "Avni Ullah" was 42 men and 2 officers killed, whilst 14 men and 10 officers were wounded. There was no loss of life on board the "Angora." The captain of the British steam-ship "Ranzani" reports having had his vessel searched off Cape Gatti in Cyprus on Saturday night by the "Garibaldi," which made him stand by from 10 P.M. to the morning.

Concurrently with the commencement of the bombardment of the Turkish boats five heavy shells, some of 90 centim. in length by 30 centim. in diameter and some of 70 centim. by 15 centim., were fired over the western extremity of the town and fell in close proximity to the municipal hospital, situated in a commanding position on a sand hill some 2 kilom. to the south-west of the harbour.

Though it is in the line of fire, it is inadmissible that these long shots could have been due to the necessity of finding the range, and it can only be surmised that the admiral either wished to overawe the authorities and inhabitants, or, as seems more reasonable, to blow up the powder magazine situated in that neighbourhood. One of the larger shells fell and imbedded itself without exploding in the sand less than 20 yards to the south of the hospital. The second, of the smaller size, fell but did not burst, about 50 yards to the south of the building.

The third of the larger size embedded itself in the sand about 200 yards to west-south-west of the hospital without exploding. The fourth, of the larger size, exploded about 250 yards from the building.

The fifth fell into the sea about 1,000 yards to the west-south-west of the hospital.

This episode of the war was probably unavoidable, but the general impression it has made on the foreigners who witnessed it is one of admiration for the heroism displayed by the officers and crew of the "Avni Ullah" and "Angora," who stuck to their ships to the last moment, and only hauled down their flag and abandoned them after they had commenced burning.

I have, &c.
H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Enclosure 2 in No. 108.

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 12.)
Sir, *Beirout, February 29*, 1912.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 11 of yesterday's date on the subject of the destruction of the Turkish gun-boat and torpedo-boat, I have the honour to report as follows on the perturbation caused in this town by the action of the Italian war-ships.

Ever since the panic caused in the autumn by the false alarm as to the intentions of the Italian forces to effect a landing at Beirout, as described in my despatch No. 65 of the 9th November, 1911, there has existed a certain unrest due to the feeling that the possibility of such an event was not past, so that the mere sight of the

Italian ships off the town on the 24th immediately created a panic among the inhabitants. The Moslems, with visions of the sufferings of their co-religionaries in Tripoli, feared for themselves, and a general exodus of their women and children to the Lebanon took place, whilst the men rushed in great numbers to the barracks and demanded arms, which, being refused, they overpowered the sentinels and broke into the "Redif" depôt, carrying away 1,080 rifles and the contents of 90 cases of cartridges. Some returned to their quarter of the town, whilst others joined the crowd, all armed, on the quays of the harbour.

Others broke into two or three shops where sporting rifles and guns were sold and took all they could, besides looting them of their other goods.

It was during these first moments of excitement that three or four Christians and one Russian Jew, mistaken for Italians, were killed, and foreigners found in the streets were hustled and menaced. One Druze was killed and another wounded for refusing to join a party of Moslems and "go for" the foreigners.

Mr. Acting Vice-Consul Flecker, who was driving back from the consulate-general to his hotel to bring Mrs. Flecker to the consulate-general at about 9 A.M. with a "cavass" and accompanied by M. Tchelkovnikof, Russian consul of Hama, was stopped by a menacing crowd near the barracks, and owed his escape from further possible violence to the timely intervention of a soldier and an armed civilian, who saw him and his companion safely to their hotel. (Appreciation of the conduct of this soldier has been duly expressed to the authorities.)

The Christians all fled from their offices and shops in the business quarter to their houses in justifiable fear of the rabble.

In the meantime, the Governor-General, Hazim Bey, assisted by the military commandant-general, Hashim Pasha, and the gendarmerie commandant, Colonel Nazmi Bey, took prompt and effectual measures to prevent the molestation of foreigners and Christians by the armed Moslem mob and to defend the Government House against a rush on the central prison in the ground-floor.

When I went at 10 A.M. to see Hazim Bey, whom I found at the police station surrounded by all the authorities and an excited Moslem mob clamouring for the evacuation of the prisoners, I found that he had the Moslem mob in hand, and I drove round to the various British institutions and to some British families to reassure them as to the situation, but recommending them to stay indoors that day and the next. I sent similar messages to the Christian quarter in which this consulate-general is situated.

At my request, the Governor-General had immediately placed strong military guards at the consulates, principal hotels (to which many Italians afterwards fled), and some foreign institutions, banks, &c., owing to the unmistakable intention shown by the Moslem crowd to revenge themselves on foreigners.

At the police station I was shown several dead bodies, of which one was that of a woman, and I passed several being carried in the streets, which were deserted by Christians but filled with Moslems carrying military rifles and every species of fire-arms and swords, which state of things continued all that day and night.

On Sunday the arrival of three squadrons of the 30th Cavalry Regiment from Damascus, followed by two squadrons of the 28th and 29th Regiments, strengthened the hands of the authorities in tackling the mob, who resisted their attempts to get back the stolen rifles, and martial law was proclaimed. On Monday orders came from Constantinople to mobilise such "redifs" as the general might consider necessary, but he had mobilised only the Beirout battalion. Over 1,000 men presented themselves within 24 hours, showing keenness to be enrolled; but the Governor-General thinks that their services can be dispensed with now.

As stated in my telegram No. 8 of the 26th, Hazim Bey, the Governor-General, deserves commendation for the courage and energy displayed by him in extremely difficult circumstances, and it is universally recognised that it was due to the prompt measures taken by him with the assistance of General Hashim Pasha, Colonel Nazmi Bey, of the gendarmerie, and Husni Bey, chief of police, that graver disorders were prevented. His Excellency, after being faced with the serious and pressing question of the surrender of his country's war-ships, followed by their destruction, had to deal immediately with the armed rabble menacing the prisons and the necessity of safeguarding the threatened lives and property of foreigners and Christians. Most of the time he went about on foot unprotected by an escort, as all vehicles had gone away with refugees, and all the military gendarmerie and police forces were employed in different parts of the town.

According to the reports of the vice-consuls under my superintendence the news

of the events at Beirout, which were exaggerated into a bombardment of the town and a landing of troops, created a great stir owing to a fear that similar action might be taken at other ports on this coast, but the authorities acted with due promptitude, and as true versions of what took place came to hand the excitement calmed down.

At Fourni Chubak, a Lebanese frontier guard-house, an affray took place between the guard of thirty men and one or two score Moslems fleeing into the mountain, most of them carrying rifles taken from the Beirout redif depôt, which the Lebanese officer insisted upon being given up to him. The crowd would not yield and preferred returning to the town. There were three or four casualties.

I have, &c.
H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

[11455] No. 109.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 203.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March 12, 1912.*

ASSIM BEY yesterday expressed some anxiety as to Russian action in the Caucasus. He said that recently at Batoum, Tiflis, and Kars there had been a considerable increase of troops, and the usual measures preparatory to military activity had been taking place.

The Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburgh had been instructed to enquire of M. Sozonof the reasons for these measures, but the Minister replied with a laugh that he knew nothing of it, but would enquire. He had subsequently been informed that there was no truth in the report, but Assim Bey said that he was sure of his information, in spite of the denial of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[11459] No. 110.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 207.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March 12, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Jerusalem, reporting on the state of affairs at Gaza.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 110.

Consul Satow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 25.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, February 29, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the consular agent at Gaza has reported that, according to his information, the local authorities intend to distribute arms to the Bedouins in the Beersheba district.

His informant, who is a sheikh, well known to him, stated that recently the leading sheikhs were summoned to the Government House, treated with much politeness, and informed that, as the Bedouins were the only persons upon whom the Government could rely in the present disturbed state of affairs, it intended to distribute arms to them. They were therefore asked to estimate the number of men for whom arms would be required.

M. Knesevich states that the number of rifles stored in barracks at Gaza is about 16,000.

The sheikh, after giving the foregoing account of what had passed, then proceeded vigorously to curse the Government. He said that the exhortation to patriotism would fall on deaf ears, that the Bedouins hated the Government, and will be glad of an excuse of an Italian raid at Gaza to pillage the town and kill the officials. He concluded with the wish, which, according to M. Knesevich, is often expressed to him, that the English would take the country soon.

Although his language was presumably influenced by the fact that he was talking to the British consular agent, there seems to be no doubt that the Turkish Government is very far from being popular with the Bedouins, and that in distributing arms among them it would be making a somewhat hazardous experiment.

It appears that, in addition to the fears of a raid which have been once more excited by the Italian action at Beirout, a telegram from Constantinople has been received by the local authorities, informing them that there has been some talk of the annexation to Egypt of some portion of Palestine, and enjoining them to keep a watchful eye on the natives of the frontier districts.

M. Knesevich also reports a rumour which is current to the effect that the construction of three forts in the Beersheba district on the Turco-Egyptian frontier at Khalasak, Shanak, and El Sini is intended. Nothing, however, has as yet been done.

I have, &c.
H. E. SATOW.

[11460] No. 111.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 208.)
Sir,

Constantinople, March 12, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Bussorah, reporting on the movements of a certain Danish subject who has been in Bussorah, and has proceeded to Koweit in disguise.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 111.

Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 11.)
Sir,

Bussorah, February 13, 1912.

I AM informed to-day that a Dane named B. Raunkraer, of Copenhagen, employed by the Royal Geographical Society of Denmark, arrived in Bussorah on the 22nd January last, and stayed at the International Hotel. The Vali called on him several times, and he, in turn, visited the Vali several times, and had long interviews with him and dined with him. The Vali speaks German fluently, and they conversed in German.

The Dane left Bussorah for Koweit by the desert route via Zobeir in two carriages on the 27th January, and was disguised in ordinary Arab dress.

I have not yet been able to ascertain what his business was here, but I informed the political agent at Koweit of his movements as soon as they were brought to my notice.

I have, &c.
F. E. CROW.

[11469] No. 112.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 214.)
Sir,

Constantinople, March 12, 1912.

FROM information which has reached me recently from His Majesty's consul-general at Bagdad, I gather that the Germans in that city are somewhat divided in their views as to the arrangements made for the transport thither of material, &c., for constructive work on the Bagdad Railway. On the one hand, Meissner Pasha seems anxious to obtain the cheapest and most efficient transport available, while M. Endruchs, the local representative of the Deutsche Bank, is endeavouring to attain the end in view solely by increasing the number of Turkish steamers, in the ultimate hope of bringing the Turkish administration under German influence or control.

Lynch's agent at Bagdad was in hopes of forming a special separate flotilla, for the carriage of material, to be owned partly by the Turks, partly by Messrs. Lynch, and, perhaps, also partly by the railway company, the present fleets of the former

[11467] No. 112*.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 215.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March 12, 1912.*

IN Sir R. Rodd's despatches Nos. 31 and 35 of the 5th and 8th ultimo respectively, copies of which were forwarded to me in your despatch No. 62 of the 19th ultimo, reference is made to Seyyid Idriss, who is described as having hitherto abstained from joining in the Arab movement against Ottoman rule, but as having now decided to raise the standard of revolt.

As reported to you in my despatch No. 178 of the 28th ultimo, as well in various despatches during the course of last year, Seyyid Idriss has been in open revolt for the past year, and he has never yet laid down his arms; operations against him are in progress at the present moment, but the reports which are current and generally credited here, of his having come to an understanding with the Italians lately, are based more upon the probability of such an eventuality than upon any authentic information received to that effect. The Turkish military authorities admit, however, that such an understanding might make the situation in Assyr even more awkward than it is at present, but they do not attach so much importance to it as the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs appears to, and they altogether scout the idea of Seyyid Idriss being able to invade the Hedjaz.

The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I questioned yesterday as to the situation in Assyr, stated that he had reason to believe that Seyyid Idriss was at this moment in full flight before the Turkish troops.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

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remaining independent as before; but there seems great doubt as to whether such a combination could ever be established. The Deutsche Bank are evidently anxious to come to some arrangement with the Turkish administration, while the Turkish Government are, as far as I have been able to ascertain, altogether opposed to any arrangement being made with Messrs. Lynch for the carriage of the railway material.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[11656] No. 113.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 18.)

Sir, *India Office, March 16, 1912.*

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Mallet's letter, dated the 13th March, regarding the offer made by the Indian Government to undertake the maintenance of the Turkish lights in the Red Sea, and, in reply, to say that the Marquess of Crewe concurs in the instructions proposed to be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome.

I am, &c.
R. RITCHIE.

[11672] No. 114.

Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company to Foreign Office.—(Received March 18.)

3, Salters' Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,

Sir, *March 16, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that telegrams have been received from our Bussorah and Bagdad agents to the effect that permission to tow a second barge has been withdrawn, although it is understood to be contrary to the wish of the Governor-General of Bagdad and the Governor of Bussorah, from which they assume that instructions for the withdrawal have been issued at Constantinople.

Permission was granted to my company by the Sublime Porte to tow an extra barge to transport 3,800 tons of accumulated cargo in a note dated 6th September, 1911, conveyed to us with your letter of the 19th December last.

Of this 3,800 tons of accumulation, 1,568 tons only have been transported, and I would be greatly obliged by instructions being given to His Majesty's Ambassador in Constantinople to take such steps as may be necessary for the immediate continuance of the permission until such time as the balance, *i.e.*, 2,232 tons, has been dealt with.

The agents of this company are keeping a careful record of the tonnage carried under this permission.

I am directed to point out that the action of the Turkish authorities in withdrawing the permit before the purpose for which it was given has been accomplished will tend to a further accumulation of cargo at Bussorah, and it is to avoid this that we are pressing for the fulfilment of the permission for the transport of the full 3,800 tons. I need hardly mention that we are dealing with the accumulation as rapidly as the restricted facilities permit.

I am, &c.
FRED. W. PARRY, *Acting Secretary.*

[11810] No. 115.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 19.)

Sir, *India Office, March 18, 1912.*

WITH reference to the letter of this Office, dated the 13th March, 1912, regarding the dredging of the Shatt-el-Arab bar, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to invite the attention of Secretary Sir E. Grey to the fact that the view of the naval commander-in-chief, based on political and practical considerations and concurred in

by the Government of India, is in harmony with what was stated in the letter of this Office dated the 20th December last.

The circumstance that the Turkish Government are now shortly to open negotiations in response to the British memorandum of the 29th July last affords additional ground for refraining from facilitating at the present moment any Turkish project for dredging the bar in question.

Copy of the naval commander-in-chief's letter dated the 10th February last, referred to in the Viceroy's telegram of the 12th idem, is herewith transmitted.

I am, &c.
R. RITCHIE

Enclosure in No. 115.

Commander-in-chief, East Indies, to Government of India.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Bombay, February* 16, 1912.

WITH reference to Marine Department letter of the 8th February, 1912, and former correspondence relative to the proposal to dredge the bar of the Shatt-el-Arab, be pleased to lay the following remarks before his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council.

2. I very strongly deprecate any suggestion to allow a company working on behalf of the Turkish authorities, or in any way under Turkish direction, to interfere with the bar of the Shatt-el-Arab.

3. I am opposed to the policy on political grounds, because it will give the Turks a claim to sole control of the river. This will be manifestly undesirable, and it will be found very difficult to contest the pretension when the further questions in that connection which need settlement come up for discussion.

4. I further consider the proposal to be dangerous on practical grounds, for it appears to me that it will be necessary to construct regular training works simultaneously with the dredging, and to watch the behaviour of the river during the operations in order to ensure that it shall not alter its course in such a way as to again partially close the bar. This is a matter which cannot be entrusted with safety to the vagaries of Turkish officials.

5. I am of opinion that the recent increase in depth upon the bar is due to the silting up of the channel which connects the Shatt-el-Arab with the Bahmanshir. This has caused the greater part of the water of the Shatt-el-Arab to be retained in the channel of that river instead of being divided between the two. The result is that there is a greater scour, and consequently an improved depth upon the bar. Any interference with this channel, even to deepen it, without at the same time closely observing the effect of the operations on the recently formed shoals, might lead to most disastrous results.

6. I may add that I believe that a careful study of the whole question will show that a very great deal might be done to improve the navigation of the river by the construction of training works only, and that in any case these should be undertaken either before, or at least simultaneously with, dredging operations.

7. I would therefore very strongly urge that, before any tinkering with the present channel is permitted, the negotiations already opened with Turkey on the subject of the commission to control the navigation of the river should be brought to a successful conclusion, and that a competent engineer should be appointed to draw up a comprehensive scheme for dealing with the whole question.

I have, &c.
E. J. W. SLADE,
Rear-Admiral.

[10379] No. 116.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

(No. 125.)
(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 19, 1912.

YOUR telegram No. 45 of the 10th March: Red Sea lights.

You should thank the Italian Government, but say that it would hardly be consistent with His Majesty's Government's duties as a neutral to express approval or disapproval of the procedure proposed.

[10020 No. 117.

Sir Edward Grey to the Marquess Imperiali.

HIS Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Italian Ambassador, and has the honour to refer to correspondence, ending with his Excellency's note of the 10th ultimo, on the subject of the position of the frontier between British and Turkish territory to the west of Aden and to the east of Warner Point.

Sir E. Grey has the honour to inform the Marquess Imperiali that the frontier in question touches the sea at Husn Murad to the east of Warner Point, and that, at the time when it was delimited, the Turkish Government bound themselves not to alienate to any third Power the territory adjacent thereto, consisting of about 550 square miles, roughly, in the form of a triangle, the apex of which lies at Gebel Numan, the sides extending from that point along the frontier to Husn Murad and to Kuddam respectively, and the base being formed by the coast-line between the two last-named places.

Sir E. Grey has the honour to add that His Majesty's Government could not acquiesce in the acquisition by any third Power of any part of the coast-line referred to after the conclusion of peace.

Foreign Office, March 20, 1912.

[11094] No. 118.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 22, 1912.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, relative to the question of the means to be adopted to ascertain whether the Turkish military post on Bubiyan Island has been increased, and to inform you in reply that the instructions sent to His Majesty's consul at Bussorah by His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople originated in the manner therein surmised.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey shares the view of the Marquess of Crewe that it would be inadvisable to send a gun-boat to the spot to ascertain the situation at the present juncture if that result can be attained by any other means, since such a step might, as suggested in your letter, adversely affect the success of the negotiations now proceeding.

Sir E. Grey accordingly concurs in the instructions which his Lordship proposes to send to the Government of India on the subject.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

[12432] No. 119.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 221.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March* 18, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to report that invitations have been issued by the Turkish Ministry of Public Works to Messrs. Pearsons, Sir John Jackson (Limited) and Paulings to send in their tenders for contracts for the Mesopotamian Irrigation Works by the 20th April next. The work for which tenders are invited will be for a matter of some 1,500,000*l*. The Minister of Public Works has, I understand, stated that the Batignolles Company have also the intention of submitting tenders in combination with Messrs. Creusot; but the British firms do not appear to be at all alarmed at the prospect of the French competition.

Moreover, M. Bompard tells me that it cannot be the fact that this firm is competing, as they would certainly not do so without advising him.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

[12531] No. 120.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 24.)

(No. 69.)
(Telegraphic.) *Decode.* *Constantinople, March 24, 1912.*

VICE-CONSUL at Scala Nuova reports assassination of Prince of Samos. Murderer arrested.

[12544] No. 121.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 222. Confidential.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March 17, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul-general at Beirout, reporting the arrest of certain Egyptian sheikhs at Haifa on a charge of acting as secret agents of Seyyid Idriss.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 121.

Consul-General Cumberbatch to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 14. Confidential.)
Sir, *Beirout, March 8, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to report that news has reached Mr. Vice-Consul Abela at Haifa to the effect that four Egyptian sheikhs were arrested last week in that town on the charge of exhorting Moslems to sever themselves from the Ottoman Caliphate and join an Arab one under the Seyyid Idriss.

It is also averred that quite a hundred emissaries from the same quarter are travelling over Palestine and Syria on the same mission.

I have, &c.
H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

[12546] No. 122.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 224. Confidential.)
Sir, *Constantinople, March 17, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Erzeroum, containing observations on the proposed dispatch by the Porte of a special mission to Kurdistan in connection with the agrarian question.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 122.

Consul McGregor to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 15. Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, March 5, 1912.*

I HAVE had the honour to receive your Excellency's despatch No. 2 of the 16th ultimo on the subject of the Turkish Government's decision to send a special mission to Kurdistan to enquire into the agrarian disputes between Armenians and Kurds.

The Government's intention has been known here for some time, and, in fact, it was given out that the mission had already left, or was on the point of leaving, Constantinople, so that the adjournment of the date of departure only increases the scepticism entertained among the Armenian population regarding the results to be

hoped for from this measure, which is looked upon as merely an electioneering device. This suspicion has been deepened by the fact that the date of the mission's departure has been fixed for after the elections, and many people even doubt whether it will ever leave the capital.

The Armenian Bishop of Erzeroum entirely shares the general opinion, and informs me that he is reporting to the Patriarchate in that sense. He also declares that, even were the Government sincere in its intentions, the mission, as at present constituted, cannot but prove abortive. His Eminence states that, in order to deal successfully with the problem throughout a vast region inhabited by a peasantry whose profound ignorance—not to mention their inborn mendacity—must render any careful investigation prolonged and laborious, not one commission, but many commissions, comprising capable officials representing the Departments of Justice, Finance, Agriculture, and Home Affairs would require to devote many months to their arduous task, while the sum of £T.100,000 would in some instances be swallowed up by the needs of a single kaza, and, with the exception of the vilayets of Diarbekir and Mamuret-ul-Aziz, there is not enough suitable land at the Government's disposal to satisfy the claims of both parties. The bishop added that he believed the vali was strongly opposed to the dispatch of the mission.

I called next day on the vali, and was somewhat surprised to find that his Excellency not only shared in their entirety the Armenian bishop's views regarding the utility and chances of success of the proposed mission, but that he expressed himself against it in much more energetic terms than the bishop had done. His Excellency informed me that he had reported exhaustively on the deplorable economic condition of the agricultural population, and had also indicated what he considered as the minimum of measures necessary to ensure real and permanent improvement. He considered that the money to be spent on the mission might as well be thrown into the sea, and that the final result would merely be to make matters worse than they were already.

There can be no doubt that this last statement is true, for the anarchy in the Kurdish districts continues to prevail unchecked, and it is persistently stated on all hands that foreign influence is at present particularly active among the Kurdish tribes, who are already sufficiently demoralised by the long-continued supine attitude of the authorities. The vali admitted to me in this connection that the organisation of the Kurdish light cavalry was meeting with opposition among many Kurdish chiefs, and he was evidently not disposed to be communicative on the subject.

I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of a document communicated to me by the Armenian bishop, giving a list of lands, &c., claimed by Armenians in the kazas of Erzeroum, Passon, Khinis, and Terjan.*

With regard to the extended powers given to the valis of Erzeroum, Van, and Bitlis, I understand that, as far as this vilayet is concerned, they do not mean more than the power of dismissing, without reference to Constantinople, officials not appointed by Imperial Iradé. As the dismissal of that category would simply involve the appointment of others of the same kind, nothing much can be hoped for on that score.

I have, &c.
P. J. C. McGREGOR.

P.S.—I have the honour to enclose herewith an extract from a letter addressed to me by the Rev. G. Knapp, at present in charge of the Bitlis vice-consulate, giving a general idea of the conditions prevailing in that vilayet.

P. J. C. McG.

Enclosure 2 in No. 122.

Rev. G. Knapp to Consul McGregor.

(Extract.) *Bitlis, February 12, 1912.*

IT may be well to bear in mind that for all the murders and outrages of the last eighteen months there has been no punishment to speak of. A year ago last summer several soldiers were killed in the Khuyt region. A year ago last December three zaptiehs were killed in the adjacent Modyan region. Last May an Armenian priest and seven of his villagers were cruelly murdered and mutilated in the Khuyt region. A demonstration was made in the early summer by sending several companies of soldiers

* Not printed.

to the Khuyt region, and the vali was with the troops in person for a time. Some eighty Kurds were seized and sent to the prison here. Only three of these were responsible for the murder of the priest and his companions. After keeping these Kurds in prison for several months they were all released without any trial.

Last February a young Kurd in the Khizan region killed three or four Armenians. He has been put in prison, but the effort is being made to prove that he is a minor and therefore not responsible.

In one of the Dadig villages, adjacent to Khizan, two Kurds killed an Armenian last summer in broad daylight. They were evidently carrying out the orders of a superior. No Kurds have been arrested in this case.

The attack on the mail last summer ten hours south of here and the wounding of a zaptieh has passed without anything being done.

No one has been arrested in connection with the attack and looting of the store in Molakand and the murder of the Armenian owner, of which I have already written you. Leading men like Mussa Bey, who are known to be responsible for these outrages, are at large, and no serious effort is made to punish them. It is not difficult to predict that unless the Government changes its policy and takes strong repressive measures, the Kurds are bound to cause serious disturbances in the spring.

[12550] No. 123.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 228.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March 19, 1912.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your despatch No. 36 of the 30th January, in which you were so good as to ask my opinion whether the action of the Turkish local authorities at Bagdad in issuing a notice prohibiting the navigation of the Euphrates and Tigris by foreigners constitutes an infringement of foreign rights, whether in that case it would be expedient to raise the subject from the point of view of British interests, or whether it is to be apprehended that such action on our part might involve the risk of foreign competition on the Tigris.

Since writing my despatch No. 59 of the 20th January which called forth your enquiry, I have received from His Majesty's consul-general at Bagdad a translation of the notice in question (Bagdad summary for January 1912), and I enclose a copy thereof for reference. It will be seen that although the terms of the document are not very precise, the evident intention is to exclude foreign-owned vessels from every description of navigation on the two rivers, whether from the sea to any port on them, *i.e.*, direct trade or between ports on them, *i.e.*, *cabotage fluvial*. That the prohibition of the latter is intended is clear from the exception made in favour of Messrs. Lynch's steamers—which are, moreover, carefully limited to three—which are engaged exclusively in that species of traffic.

From the memoranda enclosed in your despatch under reply, I gather that in your opinion we can claim, under the various treaties therein quoted, to be entitled to engage in the navigation of the internal waters of the Ottoman Empire, certainly for the direct trade, and also, though less certainly, for fluvial cobotage.

So far as "direct trading" is concerned, I am disposed to agree with the above view, but it is, to say the least of it, unfortunate that in the only case that has arisen of late years, *i.e.*, that of the steam-ship "Euxine" at Bartin, in 1889, we were content to accept a money compensation, and did not insist on the admission of our rights. On the other hand, our position is strengthened by the fact that during the commercial treaty negotiations, 1888 *et seq.*, the Turkish commissioners signed *ad referendum* an article which specially recognised to us the rights of trading to Bussorah and to all other ports and towns situated not more than 10 kilom. from the sea. It is true that the present notice of the Bagdad vilayet is so widely drawn as to prohibit "direct" trading even with Bussorah, but I feel quite certain that there is no real intention of enforcing anything so unreasonable, unless, it may be, against the Persian sailing-vessels expressly mentioned, and I therefore think that it would be useless to make any communication to the Porte on the question.

On the question of fluvial cabotage, however, I venture to submit the opinion that whatever rights we may once have been in a position to claim under treaties, we have long since practically deprived ourselves of the power to insist on them now. The only instance of such trade being carried on is that of Messrs. Lynch on the Tigris.

From the very beginning, however, Messrs. Lynch have been in the position of persons obtaining and enjoying exceptional privileges peculiar to themselves and strictly limited, not rights to which all British subjects—and presumably under most-favoured-nation treatment other foreigners—were entitled. Had it been otherwise, and had the rights devolving from the Austrian treaties of 1718 and 1784, the Russian treaty of 1783, and the Belgian treaty of 1838 ever received the sanction of practice it should have been superfluous for Lord Stratford to have concluded the "arrangement" of 1846, and for Messrs. Lynch in 1861 to have obtained the special Vizierial letter renewing to them in particular the privileges already secured to all British subjects under the "arrangement" of 1846. The attitude of the Turks towards the Lynch Company, so far as I am aware, throughout its existence, but certainly for the last thirty years, shows quite unmistakably that they at all events regard the company as enjoying anomalous privileges not treaty rights, and we ourselves have, wrongly perhaps, been drawn by the force of circumstances and the temporary exigencies of negotiations, into acquiescence with the Turkish view. We have further vitiated our case as regards fluvial cabotage by the article of the draft commercial treaty to which I have already alluded, viz., article 16 (article 18 in the final draft), in which we showed our readiness to recognise the right of the Porte to reserve not only the fluvial cabotage but also the *petit cabotage* in the Sea of Marmora, the Gulf of Smyrna, &c., to the Ottoman flag (Confidential Print, Turkey, Commercial Negotiations, Section 11, Sir N. R. O'Conor's despatch No. 12, Commercial, Enclosure No. 4), while Messrs. Lynch's rights on the Tigris between Bagdad and Bussorah were to be safeguarded by a special *protocole final* to be annexed to the treaty (see draft treaty, printed November 1911). In the circumstances, therefore, it appears to me that it would be impossible for us to make a claim to the right to fluvial cabotage with any prospect of success, in any case I agree with Mr. Lorimer that the Bagdad notice is not likely to affect our interests.

I must confess that I am at a loss to understand the statement made by Mr. Young with respect to the *navigation intérieure* and quoted by Mr. Brant in his memorandum, that "La Sublime Porte a renoncé à toute opposition active aux réclamations étrangères," but I am disposed to think that it was not intended as would seem at first sight to apply to *cabotage fluvial* or *petit cabotage*, but only to direct trading on which point the Porte had in principle given way by the signature *ad referendum* of the above-mentioned article of the commercial treaty with us.

My attention had been called by Mr. Consul Waugh, to whom I referred your despatch under reply to a cognate question which is not unlikely to arise in the future, whether foreigners established in Turkey have a right to own boats under their own flag on Turkish inland waters and to use them therefore for the purpose of their own business, but without engaging in general carrying trade. The practice is certainly admitted at Constantinople and on the Bosphorus, but it is quite possible that the Turks would dispute the right on other waters, such for instance as those of the Tigris and Euphrates or the Maritza. I am, however, averse from raising the question with the Porte for the present, and think it will be preferable to wait until a concrete case presents itself.

As a matter of fact I may mention that the note which Sir P. Currie was authorised in May 1897 to address to the Ottoman Government but which Mr. Brant assumes was not sent in, was communicated to the Porte on the 13th May under No. 66. A copy thereof is enclosed herewith.

I have, &c.
GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 123.

Note Verbale communicated to Ottoman Government by Sir P. Currie.

[*Note of instructions to Dragoman.*—"Mr. Block when handing in this *note verbale* to make the verbal declaration contained in No. 42, Commercial, to the Foreign Office."]

HIS Majesty's Embassy have had the honour to receive the *note verbale* of the Sublime Porte No. 31 of the 6th April. They do not propose in the present communication to revert to the case of the steam-ship "Euxine," of which they have already treated in their *note verbale* No. 8 of the 17th January.

They cannot, however, allow the Sublime Porte to deny without protest the right clearly enjoyed by British shipping to proceed to Ottoman river ports, and must

therefore point out the many flaws which in their opinion vitiate the arguments contained in the *note verbale* under reply.

His Majesty's Embassy admit the general historical correctness of the assertion that the Treaty of Passarowitz and the Sened of 1784 refer to the navigation of the Danube. But it by no means follows that they do not cover the case of other rivers. They contain no phrase restricting their stipulations to the Danube, and the Treaty of Passarowitz even speaks of "libero ad universale commercio sui firmi." It would therefore in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government be more correct to say that the Treaty of Passarowitz and the Sened were only applied, rather than they were only applicable, to the navigation of the Danube. As the Porte justly observe, the Danube was the only commercial artery for the Austrian Empire, and therefore the only river of which there was any question in practice. Had Austrian commerce felt the need of using other rivers the right would doubtless have been claimed under the treaties mentioned. Indeed this is exactly what happened. When the Austrian commerce took the direction of the River Boyana the Austrian Government claimed and established for their merchant shipping the right to navigate that river by referring to these same treaties.

Again the arguments of the Sublime Porte respecting cabotage and the navigation of the River Euphrates are really irrelevant to the question at issue, and seem based upon a misunderstanding of the right claimed. His Majesty's Embassy have put forward no claim to fluvial cabotage for British vessels: they merely assert their right to proceed to river ports "from the sea to the river," and they merely formally notify to the Sublime Porte that they hold themselves at liberty to claim and enforce this right whenever they may think proper.

His Majesty's Embassy are the more astonished that the Porte should deny this interpretation of the treaties because the principle has already been admitted by the Imperial authorities in the negotiations with the Austrian Government about the navigation of the Boyana. The Austrian Embassy in treating this matter expressly evoked the Treaty of Passarowitz and the Sened of 1784, and Said Pasha in his note to Baron Calice of the 5th November, 1890, has expressly cited the Sened as applicable to the case.

Constantinople, May 13, 1897.

Enclosure 2 in No. 123.

Notice by the Vali of Bagdad.

THE following notice, signed by the Assistant Vali of Bagdad on behalf of the Vali, was published in the "Nawadir" newspaper at Bagdad on the 10th January:—

"The right to navigate the Tigris and Euphrates is granted to Turkish subjects only; it is not enjoyed by any foreigners except Messrs. Lynch and Company who have three steamers playing under certain conditions.

"It is understood that some sailing vessels belonging to Persians are running on both rivers; but as the prohibition (scil., of foreign vessels) includes all steamers and sailing vessels, no (foreign) steamer or sailing vessel will be allowed to enter the said rivers from the date of this notice.

"As regards steamers or sailing vessels which may have entered before this date, a period of three months from this date is allowed them to finish their operations and leave.

"Any steamer which may hereafter enter from the Persian Gulf, and any steamer or sailing vessel which is already on the Tigris or Euphrates and fails to leave within three months, will be confiscated."

It does not appear that the notice is aimed at, or will affect any British interest.

[12553] No. 124.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 231.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March* 20, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Erzeroum respecting Kurdish agitation in the vilayet of Bitlis.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure 1 in No. 124.

Consul MacGregor to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 18.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 8, 1912.

I HAVE the honour to enclose herewith extract from a private letter addressed to me by the Rev. G. Knapp, at present in charge of the Bitlis vice-consulate, giving an account of the conditions prevailing in certain districts of the Bitlis vilayet.

Your Excellency will observe that Mr. Knapp lays special stress on the existence of foreign agitation among the Kurds.

I have, &c.

P. J. C. McGREGOR.

Enclosure 2 in No. 124.

Rev. G. Knapp to Consul MacGregor.

(Extract.) *Bitlis, February* 26, 1912.

LAST Wednesday the acting vali, the new commander of gendarmes (Alai Bey), and a representative of the Union and Progress party suddenly went to Sort and vicinity. It seems that a chief of the Bader Khan clan in the Bohtan region telegraphed to the new ("Itilaf") party at Constantinople saying that some 30,000 Kurds were ready to join that party, and asking for instructions for the election of a deputy, &c. The sudden visit of this party is to investigate the grievances which led the Kurds to take take this step. That is the ostensible reason. The real reason is doubtless to find out about the Kurdish organisation that is going on. It is well established now that quantities of arms have been brought in from Russia and distributed among the Kurds. Some are known to have been distributed in this city. Responsible persons in the Mush region are convinced that Russian officers have been about disguised as Kurds.

Mussa Bey has been acquitted by the court at Mush of the charges that have been standing against him for the last two years. It came about in the true Turkish fashion. The Minister of the Interior, Adil Bey, telegraphed to the acting vali here to seize Mussa and his brothers Khusum and Noe. At the same time he sent a telegram to Mush asking that the court close the case against Mussa in his favour. He then sent a kind of reprimand to the acting vali telling him he placed himself under heavy responsibility by attempting to seize a man who had been pronounced guiltless by the court. The soldiers have been withdrawn from Mussa's village of Khuvnor, and there is even talk that he is to be given office as mudir or kaimakam. While the soldiers were at his village he bribed the officers with money, sundry presents, and articles of food, and by furnishing them with girls and young women. He has been taking levies of money from various villages, including 50 liras from his own village. He sent a letter to the Armenian bishop at Mush saying that there was to be trouble in the spring; while it was not to be directed against the Armenians, they could not very well avoid being injured, but if he would place himself under his protection he would be safe.

The Mektubjee, who was to have been transferred to Shkodra, and decided to run for Parliament, has been reinstated in his office here, and is expected from Mush in a few days. I have it on good authority that Mussa Bey spent a night at his house several weeks ago in this city.

The new vali, who is on his way hither by the southern route, has held office

these parts before, and has not left an enviable record. With him, the Mektubjee, and Mussa Bey in accord, we may expect some lively times here in the spring.

Caucuses are being held for the election of a deputy to the new Parliament. It was hoped that the population for this district would entitle the people to the election of two deputies this time, but the idea has been abandoned. The actual elections will not take place till after the arrival of the new vali.

[10800] No. 125.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 114.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 25, 1912.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a letter from the Board of Trade,* containing observations on your despatch No. 103 of the 3rd February, copy of which I caused to be forwarded to that department, relative to the effect on British commercial interests of a suggested modification of the *tracé* of the Bagdad Railway.

It has been suggested in this connection that an opportunity might occur of obtaining from the Bagdad Railway Company the transfer to a British company of the branch of the line from Sadije to Khanikin in return for some concession to Germany elsewhere, and I should be glad to receive your Excellency's views as to whether, in such circumstances, the Turkish Government would be likely to raise objections to the transaction.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[12944] No. 126.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

(No. 281.)
(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March 26, 1912.*

COULD you sound Minister for Foreign Affairs very discreetly as to whether he is really keen on Russian co-operation in the Bagdad–Gulf Railway section?

[13119] No. 127.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 27.)

(No. 121. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburgh, March 27, 1912.*

BAGDAD Railway.

Your telegram No. 281, Confidential, of the 26th March.

In a conversation which I had to-day with M. Sazonof I brought up this subject, and asked his Excellency whether he had noticed in the newspapers a telegram from Constantinople saying that the Turkish Government were contemplating excluding Russia from participation in the Gulf section, and distributing it in four equal shares between Turkey, Germany, France, and Great Britain. M. Sazonof said that he had not noticed the telegram, and asked whether I had received any official confirmation of its contents. I said that I had no information whatsoever with regard to the counter-proposals of the Turkish Government. I only mentioned the subject, because I should like to know what he thought of the idea of Russia being left out.

His Excellency said that it was a matter which would have to be considered very carefully. His first impression was that it would be a mistake to accept such a proposal, as it would undermine the predominant position with regard to the Gulf section which the Triple *Entente* would otherwise enjoy. He thought, therefore, that Russia ought to participate. On the other hand, the only argument in favour of Russian abstention was that it might give an excuse for excluding Germany from participation in the trans-Persian railway scheme.

* No. 97.

I fear that it will be impossible, unless I put the matter to him officially, to get any more definite statement of M. Sazonof's views.

You will remember that in my despatch No. 110 of last year I reported that the Russian Government in April last strongly advocated that Russia should participate in the Gulf section.

[8928] No. 128.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 122.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 27, 1912.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copies of a letter which I caused to be addressed to the Western Assurance Company, conveying to them the substance of your despatch No. 630 of the 11th September last, and of subsequent correspondence with them on the subject of the action brought against them in the Turkish commercial court in connection with their plea of non-liability towards their insured for damage caused by fire during the disturbances at Adana.*

Your Excellency will observe that, in view of the adverse judgment of the court, the company ask that His Majesty's Government should claim compensation from the Turkish Government on their behalf on the ground of the injustice of that decision.

It does not appear to me to be possible to put forward the claim merely on this ground. "Denial of justice" is a well-recognised basis for diplomatic intervention and for claiming compensation on behalf of the party injured thereby, but the term means something more than a feeling on the part of the authorities of the claiming Government, that, had they been members of the tribunal which dealt with the case, their conclusion would have differed from that arrived at by the court. In my view the term "denial of justice," which, so far as I am aware, has never been exhaustively defined, necessarily entails this idea: that the tribunal with all the facts before it could not honestly have arrived at the decision which it gave. Judged by this test, the decision complained of does not appear to amount to a denial of justice, for whatever confidence may be felt here that the decision was erroneous, it is impossible to maintain that the point of law was not one about which there was reasonable room for doubt. The grounds on which this claim is based seemed therefore inadequate to justify its presentation to the Turkish Government.

The company, however, feel some resentment at the enforcement of the judgment against them owing to its signature by the dragoman of His Majesty's Embassy, when their French competitors escaped owing to the refusal of the French dragoman to sign the judgment in the case brought against the French Insurance Company. The question must, therefore, be considered whether there is any ground upon which a claim on behalf the British company can be put forward.

The natural ground would be that the damage caused to property at Adana would all have been prevented if the Turkish authorities had taken proper steps, and that the Turkish Government are therefore liable on the ground of negligence. The proposal to claim on this ground was rejected, however, at the time, and there is a further fatal bar to its adoption on behalf of the insurance company, viz., that the property insured by them was native property, and that the underwriters cannot claim to stand in a better position than their assured. His Majesty's Government could not have claimed on behalf of the native owners, and therefore cannot claim on behalf of their insurers.

It is worthy of consideration, however, whether the Porte should be invited to refer the question to three neutral jurists upon the terms, that if these decided that the judgment of the court was wrong the company should be entitled to the benefit of that decision in future actions brought against the company in respect of other losses at Adana. This would exclude any liability on the part of the Turkish Government to pay compensation, whatever the result, and they might possibly be willing to agree to it for that reason.

In support of the plea that this course should be adopted, the following reasons could be urged on the Sublime Porte:—

The court which decided this case sits in one instance only. There is no machinery for an appeal, and even the ablest individuals can on occasions give

* To Western Assurance Company, October 9; Western Assurance Company, December 11, 1911; to Western Assurance Company, January 2; Western Assurance Company, February 28, 1912.

erroneous decisions on points of law. Some possibility of an appeal is almost invariable in a civilised country, and as none exists in the peculiar circumstances of this Tidjaret court at Constantinople, the suggestion of an international review for a decision on a test case is not unreasonable, and implies no slur on the Turkish administration of justice.

The whole case turned on the interpretation of a technical French term, *i.e.*, of a word in a language which was foreign to the members of the tribunal. The best authorities on the meaning of this word must naturally be the French themselves, and they have felt so confident that the court has not placed the correct interpretation on this word that the dragoman of the French Embassy has not signed the judgment, and it remains a dead letter as against the French litigants, which is scarcely fair as between the British and French insurance companies.

Moreover, the opinion of an eminent French jurist, Maître Clunet, is entirely favourable to the same view.

As the Western Insurance Company compromised the three actions brought against them, I am not at present disposed to ask that those decisions shall be reversed; the mere abstract question therefore would alone be referred to the proposed tribunal of neutral jurists, and the appearance of the institution of an appeal court *ad hoc* be avoided.

I should be glad to learn whether your Excellency considers that a proposal on these lines would have any chance of acceptance by the Turkish Government, and I have further to ask you to report whether any other Powers have yet obtained compensation from the Turkish Government for the losses of their nationals in connection with the events at Adana, as to which I would refer you to correspondence ending with your Excellency's despatch No. 760 of the 23rd October, 1910.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[13217] No. 129.

Treasury to Foreign Office.—(Received March 28.)

Treasury, March 27, 1912.

Sir,

I HAVE laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury Mr. Mallet's letter of the 15th instant, further respecting the lighting and buoying of the Persian Gulf, from which their Lordships are glad to note that Secretary Sir E. Grey and the Indian Government are prepared to accept the substitution of a lighted buoy for a lightship at Bushire, and that endeavours are being made to effect a reduction in the estimates for a lighthouse tender and for a depôt.

My Lords regret however that they are still not entirely convinced of the necessity for providing a lightship outside the bar of the Shatt-el-Arab.

Their Lordships observe that in the despatch of the naval commander-in-chief, which is referred to in paragraph 2 of the India Office letter of the 2nd instant, the light-vessel is only described as an absolute necessity "if the navigation of the entrance to the Shatt-el-Arab is to be placed upon a thoroughly satisfactory footing." They would infer from this that a lightship was not absolutely essential to safety (a view confirmed by the statements of naval officers to which they have already referred), and in fact it appears from page 6 of the report of the committee of 1909 that in the past British India mail steamers have frequently crossed the bar at night by means only of an arrangement for the temporary lighting of their buoys.

Moreover, their Lordships would suppose that the navigation of the bar must have been considerably improved by the action of the Turkish authorities in placing a light-ship at the outer bar.

No explanation is given by the Admiralty in their letter of the 20th May last to the Foreign Office of their view that the Turkish lightship in no way answers the purpose of a light-vessel in the position proposed by the commander-in-chief, and in their later letter of the 5th August, 1911, they only represent that a second lightship would be "desirable."

My Lords have of course no knowledge as to whether the extinction of the lights of the buoy suggested by them is a probable contingency, but they would have supposed that with due supervision and possibly the provision of a second buoy it could be rendered a remote one, and that, while the Turkish lightship was present, the buoy would be only an additional measure of security which need not be perfect.

Finally my Lords apprehend that in the last resort it will be necessary to come to some arrangement with the Turkish Government as to the lighting of the Shatt-el-Arab (*vide* the letter from the India Office to the Foreign Office of the 3rd June, 1911), and it would naturally be part of such an arrangement that the Turkish light-vessel should be placed in the position most advantageous to navigation.

Their Lordships feel strongly that the interests of British taxpayers in the lighting of the Persian Gulf are so remote that they should not be charged with any expenditure for that purpose which is not absolutely essential, and they would again earnestly press Secretary Sir E. Grey to reconsider this portion of the scheme.

My Lords note that negotiations are at present proceeding with the Turkish Government on the question of the collection of dues, and that they will be informed of the result in due course.

I am, &c.
T. L. HEATH.

[13344] No. 130.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 29.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 26th March, 1912, regarding the Turks and Bubiyan Island.

India Office, March 28, 1912.

Enclosure in No. 130.

The Marquess of Crewe to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, March 26, 1912.*

BUBIYAN Island.

Please refer to your telegram of 11th March, 1912. His Majesty's Government are unwilling to do anything themselves that could disturb course of negotiations, though it is, in their opinion, most undesirable that any action that would disturb *status quo* on eve of negotiations should be permitted on the part of Turks. Dispatch of gunboat should, therefore, only take place if it is impossible to obtain trustworthy information as to alleged increase of Turkish garrison in any other way.

[13396] No. 131.

Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company (Limited) to Foreign Office.—(Received March 29.)

3, Salters' Hall Court, Cannon Street, London, March 27, 1912.

Sir,

WITH reference to your letter of the 3rd February last on the subject of the Bagdad Railway Company and to our reply of the 6th idem, I have the honour to report that an agreement has been reached between this company and the Bagdad Railway Company, acting through their respective chairmen, for the transport of the material of the Bagdad Railway Company from Bussorah up the rivers of Turkish Arabia. A syndicate is to be formed at once, with registration in Belgium, half the capital being held by the Bagdad Railway Company and half by this company. This syndicate is to purchase and provide a fleet of steamers and barges at Bussorah suitable for the transport by river of railway material; at least half the fleet is to be built in Great Britain. The syndicate will lease the fleet to the Bagdad Railway Company, the period of the lease being dependent upon the time required for constructing the railway, but being provisionally fixed at four years. At its termination, the fleet will be removed from the internal waters of Turkey, unless the Turkish Government should signify their consent to some scheme for its future employment. The terms of the lease to the railway company provide for payment by the latter at a fixed rate per ton of material carried. It is understood that the operations of the fleet

will be confined to the carriage of railway material; but in the event of permission being given by the Turkish Government to carry general cargo on the downward voyages, it is provided that no lower rate shall be accepted than that current at the time for transport by steamer. The fleet will be worked and managed by the agents of this country acting as agents of the Bagdad Railway Company, and in concert with the local representative of that company. The agreement further provides for the early opening of negotiations with the Turkish Government for the purpose of the conversion of the syndicate into an Anglo-German-Turkish company to take over all the assets, liabilities, and contracts of the syndicate. In the new company, the Bagdad Railway Company, this company and the Turkish Government are to participate equally. It will simply step into the shoes of the syndicate, take its place and perform its objects. Should it be constituted, the whole of the material of the Bagdad Railway Company will be handed over to it for transport; but, in the event of it not being possible to form it, about one-third part of the railway material will be given to the steamers of the existing Turkish river administration.

In conveying to you this information I am instructed by my board to request you to treat it as strictly confidential, and to desire His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to do the same should the Turkish Government or individuals or firms institute enquiries. Our objects in the negotiations have been to safeguard the interests of this company, to maintain the British position on the rivers of Mesopotamia, and to secure orders for British industry. That, we submit, was no easy task in view of the great power conferred on the Bagdad Railway Company. If, as we hope, those objects have been attained within the scope of the present negotiations, and if the way has been paved at the same time for friendly co-operation with German enterprise in these regions, my board feel that they can count on the approval and support of His Majesty's Government in the course upon which they have entered for the purpose of the transport of the railway material.

I have, &c.
FRED. W. PARRY,
Acting Secretary.

[13383] No. 132.

Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company (Limited) to Foreign Office.—
(Received March 29.)

3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,
March 28, 1912.

Sir,

WE have the honour to inform you that we have received a telegram, dated the 25th instant, from our Bagdad agents advising us that the local Turkish authorities at Bussorah have prevented them from carrying out steaming trials on the Shatt-el-Arab with our steam tug the "Bulbul" on the plea that we are not entitled to run more than three steamers.

Our right to run three steamers on the Tigris has nothing to do with the question, for the Shatt-el-Arab is water open to all foreign shipping, and the plea brought forward as an excuse for the prohibition appears to be a purely vexatious one.

We beg to submit that the action of the local authorities in thus preventing trials on the Shatt-el-Arab creates a new and very dangerous precedent, and is an insidious attempt to limit the rights of free navigation hitherto enjoyed by all foreign shipping.

We beg to request action on the part of His Majesty's Government to safeguard the rights hitherto enjoyed and, as far as we are aware, hitherto unquestioned by any Turkish Government of the past.

I have, &c.
FRED. W. PARRY,
Acting Secretary.

[13406] No. 133.

Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company (Limited) to Foreign Office.—
(Received March 29.)

3, Salters' Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,
March 28, 1912.

Sir,

WE have the honour to inform you that we have received a telegram dated 25th instant, from our Bagdad agents, advising us that the Vali of Bussorah has informed our Bussorah agents that he will not allow us to replace the twin-screw steamer "Julnar," running between Bussorah and Bagdad, by the steam-tug "Bulbul."

The circumstances of the case are as follows:—

We have recently been conducting the regular service of three steamers on the Tigris with the "Julnar," the "Mejidieh," and the "Blosse Lynch," but owing to an accident to the propeller of the "Julnar" we have been compelled to lay her up temporarily for repairs.

One of our paddle steamers, the "Khalifah," being in dock under repairs, we intended employing the "Bulbul" in place of the "Julnar," but, as often happens when a replacement of steamers on the regular run takes place, the vali has raised an objection.

You may remember that this difficulty has happened before, and we are surprised that it should again occur, as we were under the impression that owing to representations by His Majesty's Ambassador on previous occasions the Vali of Bussorah had realised that we had the right of running three steamers on the river, and that replacement would necessarily take place whenever the necessity should arise.

Owing to the vali's action we are now short of one running steamer on the river, and we beg that His Majesty's Ambassador may be requested by telegraph to take up this matter with the Turkish Government, in order that the embargo on the replacement of one of our three steamers may be removed in this present instance, and that in the future such irregular action on the part of the vali may be definitely prevented by orders from the central authorities in Constantinople.

I have, &c.
FRED. W. PARRY,
Acting Secretary.

[11672] No. 134.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

(No. 125.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 30, 1912.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch No. 831 of the 19th November last relative to the permission granted by the Turkish Government to the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company to tow a second barge on the Tigris till the cargo accumulated at Bussorah shall have been disposed of, I transmit to you herewith copy of a letter from the company,* from which it appears that this authorisation has now been withdrawn contrary to the wishes of the local authorities, and though the purpose for which it was accorded is still far from having been fulfilled.

I have to request your Excellency to lose no time in enquiring whether the facts are as stated by the company, and, if so, to make an immediate representation to the Sublime Porte, with a view to secure the reversal of the instructions complained of.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[11672] No. 135.

Foreign Office to Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 30, 1912.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant relative to the reported withdrawal, by instructions from

* No. 114.

Constantinople, of the permission granted to your company by the Turkish Government to tow a second barge on the Tigris till the cargo accumulated at Bussorah has been disposed of, in spite of the fact that the purpose for which this authorisation was accorded has not been fulfilled and against the wishes of the local authorities.

I am to inform you, in reply, that a copy of your letter has been forwarded to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople with instructions to lose no time in enquiring whether the facts are as stated, and, if so, to make an immediate representation to the Sublime Porte, with a view to secure the reversal of the instructions complained of.

I am, &c.
LOUIS MALLET.

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